MARCHMONT:

A NOVEL.

BY CHARLOTTE SMITH.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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MARCHMONT.

CHAPTER I.

Me tenet . . . . . ægrum Phæacia terris.
Abſtineas avidas Mors violenta manus!
Abſtineas, Mors atra! precor, non hic mihi Mater:
Quæ legat in mœſtos oſſa peruſta ſinus?
Non Soror, Aſſyrios cineri quæ dedat odores,
Et fleat effuſis ante ſepulchra comis:
Delia non uſquam . . . .

HAD the ſafety of Marchmont been certain, had his letters removed, even temporarily, the continual fears that on his account oppreſſed the hearts of his mother and his ſiſters, as well as that of

Althea, who, though ſhe ſaid nothing, was by no means the leaſt agitated among them, their days would have paſſed in more tranquillity and comfort than, after all the former had ſuffered, they could ever expect. But the vague and uncertain reports which continually reached them from that part of the continent where they believed Marchmont ſtill to be, the hiſtories of horror that every day met their eyes in the newspapers, and his not having written ſince he firſt found protection with the Engliſh at Toulon, formed together ſo much ground for apprehenſion on the part of thoſe who loved him, that their days were overclouded by continual anxiety; they all often, without daring to communicate their ſentiments to each other, felt that the dread is often more difficult to ſupport than the certainty of an evil, and that it deprived them of every enjoyment of life.

Althea

Althea watched, with trembling ſolicitude, the fading countenance of Mrs. Marchmont, and the eager anxious looks of the animated Lucy; while Amelia, amidſt all her efforts to ſpeak comfort, ſunk into hopeleſs deſpondence; and, while ſhe ſought to find arguments againſt the terrors that preyed on her mother, ſeemed to feel how well grounded thoſe terrors were, and to want herſelf the comfort ſhe attempted to beſtow.

Sometimes, as if afraid of being together left the communication of their thoughts ſhould increaſe their mutual ſufferings, Mrs. Marchmont, who was frequently ill, remained alone in her own room, and Amelia ſhut herſelf in hers; while Althea, Lucy, and Milly, not daring to ſpeak on the ſubject neareſt their hearts, and yet unable to enter on any other, ſat ſad and ſilent at their work, expecting, with almoſt agonizing apprehenſions, the newſpaper and

the poſt, and trembling at every knock they heard at the door.

Such was the cruel ſituation of the family, when one morning, in the middle of January, a gentleman rode up to the door of their cottage: he enquired for Miſs Dacres.—Althea, who had only a ſlight view of him without diſtinguiſhing his face as he rode by the window, imagined it was ſome perſon on buſineſs from Lady Dacres; and however reluctantly, yet ſuppoſing it to be neceſſary, ſhe directed him to be admitted to the parlour, from whence her two young companions went out, to leave her at liberty to ſpeak to the ſtranger.

What was her ſurpriſe, and, after a moment, her alarm, to ſee Mr. Everſley!

Not even the domeſtic unhappineſs which Althea well knew had ſo long embittered his life, could account for the expreſſion of his countenance. It was evidently recent and very deep concern

concern that affected him. He tried to make the uſual compliments of ſalutation, but failed. He ſat down, fetched a deep and tremulous ſigh, and his lips quivered as he faintly uttered—

"How are the ladies?—How is poor Mrs. Marchmont? . . . . . Will Miſs Dacres pardon my intruding on her?—Her friendſhip for this unfortunate family makes me hope it."

"Good God!" exclaimed Althea, "what new misfortune has befallen them? Ah! Mr. Everſley, ſome great evil has overtaken your friend Marchmont—He is, perhaps, no more!"—Then ſtruck to the heart by ſo terrible a ſuppoſition, ſhe claſped her hands together, and remained ſilent and breathleſs.

"I hope," ſaid Mr. Everſley, trying to ſpeak with more firmneſs, "that he is yet alive: but I cannot conceal the truth. He has been—he ſtill is, I fear, in the moſt imminent danger:—in the dreadful affair at Toulon he has been

a ſevere ſufferer. He did not eſcape by ſea like the reſt: his friendſhip for the Lavergnac family has engaged him in difficulties, from which it is much to be apprehended he will find it hard to extricate himſelf, even if the bad effect of all he has endured ſhould be reſiſted by his ſtrength of conſtitution and his youth."

"He has been ill, then?" articulated Althea faintly. "Ah! Mr. Everſley, to *me*, at leaſt, you may diſcloſe the truth, though I fear it will deſtroy his unfortunate mother—Marchmont is dead?"

"Not that I am aſſured of," replied Mr. Everſley; "I can only repeat that, from his incoherent letter, his ſituation appears to me to be ſo precarious, that I thought it my duty, as almoſt the only remaining friend of the family, and as that letter was addreſſed to me, to take ſome means of preparing the mind of that admirable woman for a blow that may,

may, if it falls ſuddenly and unexpectedly upon her, quite overwhelm her, and leave the poor girls without the protection either of their mother or their brother."

"Alas!" ſaid Althea, "it will be but killing her by lingering tortures, inſtead of one death-ſtroke. Yet your precaution—yet the trouble you have taken is very good—very friendly! What would you adviſe *me*, Sir, to do? How ſhall I venture to communicate ſuch intelligence?—If there is yet hope that your friend may eſcape, would it not be better .....?" Althea found it impoſſible to proceed——

"I ſee," ſaid Mr. Everſley in a low voice, "how greatly you are affected. I almoſt repent of having afflicted you. The painful duty of wounding where I wiſh only to heal and to conſole, I would not transfer to you, did I not know how tender a hand it requires; and were I not perſuaded that there are

few evils which muſt not be greatly alleviated by ſympathy ſuch as yours.—Alas! Miſs Dacres, it is I who feel aſſuredly more than any body, that there are many, many calamities in life, to the endurance of which early death is infinitely preferable. Good God! how much better to die as Marchmont may, ſo beloved, and ſo regretted, than to live as . . . . . " He checked himſelf, and, leaving the ſentence incomplete, added, in a half-ſtifled voice—" Forgive my folly—The wretched are always egotiſts—I too naturally, though too weakly, recur to myſelf!" . . .

" Would it not be better," aſked Althea, collecting as much firmneſs as ſhe could—" would it not be better, ſince poor Marchmont's fate is ſtill uncertain, to conceal the worſt we know, and the ſtill worſe we apprehend, from his mother, till the final event be aſſured? If it be fatal, it will then be time enough to open to her the cruel tidings. Should Providence

Providence interpoſe in her favour, and ſave her ſon, perhaps we ſhall, by delay, avoid inflicting a wound that may be followed by the moſt dreadful conſequences."

"I believe you are right, Madam," anſwered Mr. Everſley.—"Goodneſs and wiſdom are alike conſpicuous in every thing you ſay. But, if my being here is known, how ſhall I excuſe to Mrs. Marchmont my not appearing before her?"

"It need not be known—I believe ſhe has no ſervants here who lived with her when ſhe uſed to ſee you. The younger of her daughters, who had a very ſlight view of you as you paſſed the windows, do not at all, I believe, recollect you. They imagine it is ſome gentleman come to me on the part of Lady Dacres, and the ſeverity of the weather may excuſe concealing your face as you go out. May I, Sir," continued Althea, her voice faltering—

"may I aſk to be entruſted with the letter that informs you of the ſufferings and ſituation of Marchmont? I will endeavour—ſince from the ſervice of my friends I will not ſhrink, however painful it may be to myſelf—I will endeavour to compel myſelf to act with calmneſs and deliberation, and to proceed towards giving or with-holding from my poor unhappy friend the heart-breaking intelligence, as circumſtances ſeem to demand."

"I have no ſcruple," ſaid Mr. Everſley, taking the letter from his pocket, and giving it to her, "to entruſt you with it—as I would, indeed, with all that is, or ought to be, moſt precious to myſelf.—But how, deareſt Madam, if I ſhould receive any other communication from our friend, how ſhall I tranſmit it to you?"

Althea, who found herſelf almoſt unable to ſupport the converſation, informed him, that nothing was more eaſy

than

than for him to do it by letter; and that all that remained for her was, to aſſume reſolution enough to conceal the ſhock ſhe might receive, ſhould his information be what they dreaded.

Everſley, without ſaying ſo, ſignified that he was well aware, from her partiality to Marchmont, how very difficult this would be—"But," added he, "there is no elevation of ſentiment or conduct to which the ſuperior underſtanding of Miſs Dacres does not render her equal. Oh, Marchmont! in life or in death, it muſt be my lot to envy you!"

Althea recollecting what had formerly paſſed, when ſhe fancied, and with great reaſon, that Everſley was more attached to her than merely the friendſhip between their families could authoriſe, anſwered ſlightly; and Everſley, as if conſcious of the impropriety and uſeleſſneſs of what he had unguardedly ſaid, ſeemed tempted to repeat apologies; till, ſuddenly recollecting that he might only

be betrayed into a repetition of the offence, he haſtily aroſe.

"I will wait at the inn at Sittingbourne," ſaid he, "to-night, leſt, after having peruſed our friend's letter, you ſhould have any commands for me.—Should I hear nothing before twelve o'clock to-morrow, I ſhall depart for London, where, according to this addreſs," giving Althea a card, "I have taken a houſe for three months—and where I ſhall be always ready to obey the commands of Miſs Dacres, or of her friends."

Mr. Everſley then haſtily departed, taking the precautions Althea had hinted at to conceal his face; while ſhe, unable to ſpeak to Lucy Marchmont till ſhe had read the dreadful letter, hurried, hardly knowing what ſhe did, to her own room, and locked the door.

She then, panting for breath, took it from her pocket, and attempted to read it: but the direction was blotted and confuſed;

confuſed; the ſeal, the hand-writing were all ſo many teſtimonies of the agitated and wretched condition in which the writer had been when it was diſpatched.

Althea tried to read it twice before ſhe could command compoſure enough to ſucceed; the letters floated before her eyes; their characters were indiſtinct; ſhe fancied them traced in the blood of the unhappy writer.

At length, having drank a glaſs of water, and argued herſelf into what ſhe hoped would be a ſufficient degree of reſolution to enable her to bear a detail the horrors of which might poſſibly be aggravated by their obſcurity, ſhe read, or rather with difficulty decyphered, as follows:

To W. EVERSLEY, *Eſquire.*

"My very dear Friend,

"When you learn that Marchmont, not certainly of a very deſponding temper,

per, ſuppoſes that this is the laſt trouble he ſhall ever give you, you will believe that his ſituation is ſuch as for himſelf he ſhould meet, he truſts, with fortitude, were he not dragged back to life by his tenderneſs, his fears, his regret—did he not think of thoſe who have hardly any ſupport, any comfort, any hope but what is attached to his life.—Oh! my beloved mother, my unprotected ſiſters—it is for you I would live.—There is yet another tie that would bind me to life, but ſacred is the adored name of her that has formed it. She is ſo much of an angel, that perhaps Heaven has directed it for her preſervation from greater evils, when I am diſmiſſed from a world where my misfortunes might have been communicated to her. What can fortify me againſt the fear of death like ſuch a ſuppoſition? Yet indeed, my friend, if the moſt ardent love, if the tendereſt gratitude could have reconciled her to humble fortune, ſhe would

would not with me have been unhappy!

"It is paſſed!—I am wounded—they tell me, mortally—and in a priſon where I am not conſidered as a priſoner of war; and from whence, if the ſurgeons who have viſited me ſhould be miſtaken, I ſhall, in all probability, be diſmiſſed, only to periſh on a ſcaffold.

"*Nil deſperandum* uſed to be my motto—not, however, with too much reaſon; for I think that from the time when, in perfect poſſeſſion of my reaſon, I dared to lift the veil which my poor father's affectionate hands endeavoured to ſpread between me and the dark ſhadows that hung over the fortunes of our family, every year has brought an accumulation of evil; which, while I was chained down to its endurance, I was, from combined and unconquerable difficulties, precluded from attempting to remove, by ſuch efforts as a man of my age and education, under almoſt any

other

other circumſtances, might and ought to have attempted.

—"And is ſuch a perſecuted exiſtence as I have ſuſtained worthy of regret?—Ah! yes, my friend—I am not philoſopher enough to deſpiſe, with all its evils, (and to whoſe ſhare have greater evils fallen?) an exiſtence which might have been uſeful to the dear object of my filial and fraternal affection—which might have been endeared by the poſſeſſion of the woman I adore.—But I waſte in declamation the little time that may be allowed me. I exhauſt the little ſtrength I have left.—I will briefly relate how I came into my preſent ſituation, and what that ſituation is.

"The ſame conveyance by which this letter (if I am not deceived as to its being conveyed at all) will reach England, will bring you accounts too numerous, and too true, of the circumſtances that have driven the Engliſh and their allies from Toulon; with details which, had

had I time and power to give them, my heart ſickens to recollect.

"To the accounts then that muſt be made public I refer you for an idea of the magnitude, and, alas! the conſequences of this fatal retreat—while I confine myſelf to the ſad ſtory of thoſe individuals, for whom, ſince Marchmont is one of them, the friendly and generous heart of Everſley will be deeply intereſted. I am faint after a viſit to my wound, and muſt lay down my pen; not, however, till it has told you that the bad ſymptoms are rather leſs threatening, and that this young French ſurgeon, who is now allowed to attend me, does not ſeem to think ſo ill of it as his principal. He appears to want neither ſkill nor humanity; nor is he ſo bigoted to republican ideas as the *Maître Chirurgien* who has till yeſterday inſpected the condition of the priſoners. I never believed the wound abſolutely mortal after the ball was extracted. I ſtill think it

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is not. Yet it is certain that I am very weak. But a conſtitution hitherto untouched by diſeaſe may do much for a man in his twenty-fourth year.—Yet what avails my recovery, if the means fail me, as they almoſt certainly will, of prevailing on the committee, to whom my caſe will be referred, to believe me an Engliſh ſubject, and to treat me as a priſoner of war?

"I am not able now to relate the circumſtances to which this is owing. If I live, you ſhall have my ſhort eventful hiſtory. If I live!—Ah! how vain to indulge ſuch a hope! I probably now ſee through the grating of my priſon the wintry ſun (which ſtill in this climate is bright) of the opening year, the laſt I ſhall ever behold.

"My purpoſe in writing to you, Everſley, is to ſecure your good offices in conveying to my unhappy family the intelligence which will in all human probability precede my death. To whoſe friendſhip

friendſhip but to yours *can* I entruſt this painful taſk?—and ſhould it be executed by unſkilful hands, how ſad may be the conſequences!

"I have been making once more a feeble attempt to diſcover what chance there is of my being permitted to live, if my wound ſhould be cured: I perceive that money, if immediately applied, might do much, but money I have none—and it is likely that after a few days it would loſe its efficacy were I to procure it; for the French commiſſioner, who is then expected, is a man of brutal manners, ſanguinary by his nature, and from national prejudice deteſting the very name of an Engliſhman; ſo that it is very probable the efforts I have made to aſcertain my being a Britiſh ſubject may ſerve only to expoſe me to his ferocity. My only ray of hope, and it is very faint, ariſes from the kindneſs and humanity of the young ſurgeon. One of his family was obliged

by

by ſome family in England during the laſt war: he remembers it with gratitude, and has naturally a liberal temper and a good heart. But he is a very young man—he is only an aſſiſtant ſurgeon; and any attempt in which he was not abſolutely ſure of ſucceſs, would ſend me immediately to the ſcaffold, and involve him in my fate. How then can I preſs him to help me, even if I were enough recovered to meditate my eſcape?

"It is more worthy of thoſe principles I have through life endeavoured to cultivate, to ſubmit to an inevitable evil with calmneſs, rather than to involve my friends by attempting to evade it.

"Some pangs, ſome very ſevere pangs I certainly feel: they are leſs for myſelf, cruel as a violent death is at twenty-four, than for thoſe I muſt leave.

"Everſley! I conſign them perhaps in my laſt hours (for the commiſſioner is come)—I conſign my family to your unwearied

unwearied friendſhip. But remember that, as it never was my wiſh, while living, that ſuch friendſhip ſhould embitter your life, you muſt not ſuffer it to do ſo after my death.

"And now, my laſt, beſt friend, adieu! I bid you farewell, in all probability for the laſt time.—Should I yet exiſt, my firſt care will be to greet you. My worthy and friendly Deſſormes undertakes, and even at ſome hazard, to put this letter on its way to England.

"God preſerve you, my dear Everſley! Let my memory be dear to you. If it ſhould ever be painful, you will think of all your good actions towards me; you will continue ſuch friendly offices as you can towards thoſe I leave, and you will find a pleaſure even in your concern.—Once more farewell!

"E. A. M."

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Injuſtice, ſwift, erect, and unconfin'd,
Sweeps the wide earth, and tramples on mankind,
While prayers to heal her wrongs more ſlowly move behind.

WORDS can but inadequately deſcribe the condition of Althea's mind, when, after a ſecond reading, ſhe comprehended the whole purport of the foregoing letter.

Again and again ſhe read it.—Sometimes the hopes Marchmont ſeemed to hold out made her flatter herſelf that he might yet be preſerved. But the doubts that had been raiſed of his country—but the dreadfully ferocious commiſſioner!

miſſioner!—As theſe aroſe before her, ſhe felt it out of her power reaſonably to hope, and terror and deſpair took poſſeſſion of her heart.

Nothing, however, was ſo immediately requiſite as to compoſe herſelf for meeting Mrs. Marchmont at dinner; for after mature deliberation ſhe determined, if it were poſſible, to keep to herſelf all ſhe knew, and not to divulge, till it became inevitable, the fatal ſecret even to Lucy herſelf.

This undertaking was terrible to her. Had ſhe conſidered Marchmont only as a common acquaintance, it would have been very difficult to have concealed her concern from the eyes of a mother ſo tremblingly anxious about her ſon. As it was, the moſt heroic reſolution was requiſite to ſtifle the agonies ſhe endured, rather than unneceſſarily wound a boſom dear to her on account of Marchmont, as well as for itſelf. Let thoſe who have ever been called upon for

for ſuch an exertion of friendſhip imagine how difficult was the part ſhe had to act, and what ſhe muſt have ſuffered only for the ſhort time it was incumbent upon her to go through it.

She dreaded the moment of being ſummoned to dinner, which, however, ſhe could not avoid obeying. Mrs. Marchmont had all the morning confined herſelf to her room, for the depreſſion of her ſpirits was ſuch as ſhe had that day found it impoſſible to conquer. She felt what ſhe ſometimes had deſcribed in the words uſed by a celebrated French author, who in his laſt illneſs ſaid he felt no pain, only "*une difficulté de vivre.*" This difficulty—this reluctance to drag on a life where ſo much was to be dreaded for the future fate of thoſe ſhe loved, while little of hope offered itſelf, Mrs. Marchmont, with the good ſenſe of a reaſoning being, and the firmneſs of a Chriſtian, endeavoured to reſiſt. She looked at her lovely

lovely daughters.—It was for them ſhe knew her life, with all its active powers, to be neceſſary; but when all that might befall them, unportioned and unprotected as they were, became preſent to her mind; when ſhe remembered how far their brother was from them, and how uncertain it was whether he would ever be able to appear as their guardian and friend; the abſence of that dear ſon, ever the firſt object of his mother's affections, and the cruel circumſtances that had blighted all the fair proſpects of his youth, and marred the promiſe his talents, his temper, and his perſon had given, ſeemed to be evils ſo real and inſupportable, that her fortitude gave way before it; and the reſolves ſhe had made not to increaſe, by timid deſpondence, evils which only active virtue could mitigate, ſunk into that cold inert tranquillity which ſometimes appears like patience and reſignation.

In ſuch a frame of mind, increaſed by perſonal indiſpoſition, was Mrs. Marchmont, when it became the cruel taſk of Althea to put on ſome degree of cheerfulneſs, to endeavour to appear as uſual, while ſhe knew that this unhappy mother was really more wretched than in her darkeſt moments of dread and deſpondence ſhe had ever believed herſelf.

This, however, ſhe could not ſo well perform but that the ſtruggle was evident; and that ſomething had given Althea unuſual concern appeared through all her attempts to conceal it. It was natural enough for the family, who ſuppoſed a gentleman had that morning been with her from Lady Dacres, to impute her evident confuſion and diſtreſs of mind to ſomething that had paſſed in regard to her pecuniary affairs.

The innocent yet queſtioning eyes of Lucy examined thoſe of Althea with particular

particular earneſtneſs. The general idea, however, was hers, that Lady Dacres had ſent her ſome rude or unkind meſſage. Her heart ached for her beloved friend: but ſhe forbore to aſk any direct queſtions, concluding that whatever it was proper for her to know, Althea would tell her; and Mrs. Marchmont and Amelia remained ſilent from the ſame motives of delicacy. Their meal was the moſt melancholy they had ever eaten together: as ſoon as it was over they ſeparated; for to remain long under ſuch reſtraint, her heart actually burſting with anguiſh, Althea found to be impoſſible.

Lucy, more alarmed than before, ventured to take her hand as ſhe paſſed her to go up ſtairs:

"My dear friend!" ſaid ſhe, in a low and trembling voice.

Althea underſtood the appeal—"Follow me to my room, Lucy," ſaid ſhe;

"but pray take no notice of my concern."

They entered the chamber of Althea, who, finding it wholly out of her power to reſtrain any longer the anguiſh of her mind, ſat down in tears; while Lucy, hanging over her, ſaid, "That cruel Lady Dacres is the occaſion of giving you more uneaſineſs?"

Althea, unuſed to every ſpecies of deceit, and quite incapable of uſing it to a friend whom ſhe conſidered as more than a ſiſter, then thought it better to tell her the truth; for ſhe believed the good ſenſe Lucy Marchmont poſſeſſed would rather ſupport her in the difficult and arduous taſk ſhe had undertaken, than weaken the reſolution with which ſhe determined to attempt going through it.

Deſiring, therefore, in a low voice, that Lucy would ſhut the door, ſhe firſt endeavoured to arm her with calmneſs

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to endure the evil tidings that it was thus her lot to impart, and then put Marchmont's letter into her hand.

Whatever were the elevated ſpirit and ſanguine temper of Lucy, the dreadful uncertainty (an uncertainty that could hardly terminate favourably) ſeemed, and perhaps was, more difficult to bear than any certainty would have been at the inſtant; yet a little reflection, and her obſerving how deeply Althea was affected, helped to reſtore her to ſome apparent compoſure; and both were ſoon enabled, by this participation of ſorrows, to conſole and in a certain degree to reaſſure each other.

They were equally aware that nothing was more dear to the poor exile, whoſe fate they thus deplored, than the peace and health of his mother; and both had that right ſenſe of what they owed the abſent or the dead, to feel that the beſt way of teſtifying the tender regard they bore him, was to alleviate, as far as to

alleviate was poſſible, the diſtreſs of thoſe their lamented Marchmont loved. Yet ſad, heavy, and difficult to be performed was the taſk; and they ſo greatly dreaded meeting Mrs. Marchmont at their ſimple ſupper, and were ſo afraid, ſhould ſhe talk about her ſon, that they ſhould betray themſelves, that their very fears almoſt diveſted them of the caution they tried to obſerve. Lucy, trembling leſt her mother, Amelia, or Milly, ſhould begin to ſpeak of her brother, talked on indifferent matters with a vivacity and perſeverance that it was eaſy to ſee was forced; while Althea, incapable of any actual exertion, ſat in almoſt torpid deſpondence—ſometimes looking at Mrs. Marchmont with eyes filling with tears; then catching herſelf indulging ſo uſeleſs a weakneſs, ſhe complained of being unwell, of having a cold in her head, and made that an excuſe for retiring more early than uſual to her bed.

Mrs.

Mrs. Marchmont, as well as her eldeſt and youngeſt daughter, obſerved that ſomething had vexed her; but the idea of ſome unkind meſſage from Lady Dacres precluded all farther enquiry.

This artificial and dearly purchaſed calm could not, as Lucy now recollected, laſt long; for, not to live entirely without intelligence of what was going on, yet to avoid the expence of a daily paper, Mrs. Marchmont took one in that was weekly publiſhed in the county, and carried round every Saturday by an itinerant newſman.

In this paper the events that had ſo recently happened at Toulon would undoubtedly be detailed, and every diſtreſs which by the concealment of Marchmont's letter they hoped to ſave the mind of his mother, would thus ſuddenly be inflicted on it. To know, as ſhe did, that her ſon was at Toulon at the period of ſuch general danger, and not to know whether he eſcaped with

the Engliſh, gave hardly leſs occaſion for anguiſh and terror than what was already known about him. After ſome conſideration, therefore, Lucy determined to receive the paper herſelf from the man, and to ſay to her mother that it had miſſed coming, as had ſometimes accidentally happened before. This was not attended with much difficulty, and thus was obtained another week of reſpite; but it was a week of rather increaſed miſery to Althea and to Lucy, who dreaded leſt each perſon they ſaw approach the door ſhould prove to be ſome one who might relate the current news as a matter of entertainment; and as another Saturday drew near, their uncertainty how to act and their dread of the event increaſed.

On the day, however, preceding that, the poſt brought a letter to Althea, who ſaw, with breathleſs ſolicitude, that it was directed and ſealed by Mr. Everſley. Totally unable to open it, ſhe ſat down

down trembling, and bade Lucy, who was but little more capable of doing it than herſelf, break the ſeal. Scarce had ſhe done ſo, when ſhe exclaimed—"There is a letter from my brother!—Thank God!—he is alive then—he has eſcaped!"

"For God's ſake, look at the date!" ſaid Althea. "Before we rejoice, let us ſee at what time and from whence he writes."

"It is dated above a fortnight later than the laſt," exclaimed Lucy: then running over a few words, ſhe added, though almoſt inarticulate with joy—"Oh! Heaven be praiſed, deareſt, deareſt Althea, he has eſcaped!—he is *not* in danger from his wound!—We ſhall ſee him again—Our brother! the beſt, the deareſt, kindeſt . . . ."—Her voice totally failed; and Althea, having gathered courage from this beginning, collected her agitated ſpirits to read as follows:

LETTER.

"From the contents of my laſt letter it is probable my dear Everſley has given me up. I know what his friendly and affectionate heart will feel in hearing I am in a place of preſent ſafety; and though it is difficult to ſay, in the actual ſtate of the continent, when I ſhall be ſo fortunate as once more to reviſit my native land, my friend will be glad to know I do not deſpair of it; he will rejoice to have *ſuch* tidings to communicate to my family, who, if he has imparted to them the ſituation in which (with perhaps a too great tendency to deſpond) I deſcribed myſelf, will be recalled from the moſt wretched ſuſpenſe, if not anguiſh, to hope and life—for it is but too certain, that the life of my mother depends on that of her ſon.—Ah! may *his* be dedicated to render the reſt of it, if not *happy* (it

is

is a word we have no buſineſs with), at leaſt comfortable.

"But let me equally avoid deſpondence and preſumption, and avail myſelf of this ſhort interval of eaſe and tranquillity to give you as clear a narrative as I can of the ſtrange things I have ſeen—of the hair-breadth eſcape I have had from a violent death.

"If you do not already know the particulars, and have any curioſity to enquire, the little hiſtory of myſelf (till I reached an obſcure cabaret in the very centre of the Bourbonnois) is in the hands of my mother. I go on then to relate what happened to me, when, after having remained there unmoleſted ſome days, I again renewed my journey, ſometimes on a hired horſe, ſometimes taking an occaſional aſſiſtance from the vehicles of the peaſantry, but ſtill oftener on foot, towards the houſe of my venerable relation de Lavergnac, ſituated in a mountainous country, about

three leagues weſtward of Toulon—ſo that I had almoſt half France to traverſe. On my way to that place, I ſhall have to relate leſs what I ſuffered than what I thought. My Everſley is not, I think, of that deſcription of men who meaſure the conſequence of opinions by the ſituation of thoſe who offer ſuch opinions; nor will he wonder if the viciſſitudes of my life, ſhort as it has been, and the knowledge that adverſity has given me of mankind, ſhould have taught me a habit of reflecting—a habit which, when once acquired, helps the poſſeſſor to diveſt himſelf of the prejudices (often deſtructive to happineſs, and never, that I can diſcover, contributing to it) which are with ſo much pain inculcated by rote at the beginning of our lives—as if the only uſe of memory were to aſſiſt mankind in getting rid of their reaſon, and to ſubſtitute in its place ſyſtems which the cunning have invented for the ſubjection of the weak.

"Do

" Do not imagine, however, my dear friend, that I have any intention to plead in favour of that univerſal licence, that wild and impracticable ſcheme of general equality, which has, within a few years, gained ground from the writings of viſionary ſpeculatiſts, and from the propenſity of mankind to run into extremes, and to pervert the beſt general rules to the moſt unworthy private purpoſes.

" Surely, my friend, I am *not* a miſanthrope—Yet I own that when I ſee the follies, the wickedneſs of the beings with whom I am to act, I am unavoidably led to enquire wherefore the great Author of the Univerſe has peopled this planet with animals ſo worthleſs and ſo wretched;—creatures who, while their reaſon ſeems to have been wholly inadequate to the purpoſe of procuring for them a moderate ſhare of content, have miſuſed the other lights lent to them,

them, ſo as to make them new ſources of perſecution and of miſery. You will tell me I have read Swift, Voltaire, and Rouſſeau, with too much approbation.—Alas! my dear friend, look at almoſt every man you know, in the decline of life; ſee how ſad is their exiſtence, and you will be compelled to acknowledge, that when I ſay human creatures are fooliſh, wicked, and unhappy, my eſtimate is but too juſt.

"But in a world thus peopled, a man, as ſoon as he emerges from infancy, finds himſelf without any conſent of his own; and, whether he likes his ſtation or no, he muſt abide in it.—— It ſeems therefore to be true wiſdom, early to learn to live as eaſily as we can, though to live happily is (as I think we ſoon diſcover) out of the queſtion.—In *my* caſe, for example: ſo far from being allowed to live in *any way* with eaſe, I am almoſt denied the

privilege

privilege of *living at all*; at leaſt, it does not ſeem that European earth will permit me to exiſt on its ſurface!

"From my own country, which every man, and I think particularly every Engliſhman, is taught to love and venerate as ſoon as he can liſp its name, from my 'natale ſolum' I am driven by the perſecutions of a miſerable wretch whom they call an attorney;—a fellow ſtained by every vice—the diſgrace of his ſpecies—who lives in the conſtant violation of thoſe *laws* which are the boaſt and glory of Britons—but which, by ſome ſtrange *abuſe* (by all complained of, nay execrated—by none attempted to be remedied), are made the ſhield under which robberies are committed, rather than the ſword by which they are puniſhed. For this glaring defect, occaſioning more extended and incalculable miſery than any of the ſenſeleſs perverſions of mankind (except only the madneſs of war), there is, it ſeems, no remedy!

remedy!—None!—for nothing muſt be changed; and though individuals among the majority of villains who plunder under the maſks of attorneys are now and then puniſhed, no radical cure can be adminiſtered to the maſs of this crying evil—for it may be injurious to the ſanctity of the laws.——Oh! never then let ſuch laws be boaſted of!——If a phyſician were to tell me that the medicine he was going to adminiſter for the cure of a cold, could only be conveyed through the medium of a poiſoned vehicle, which might ſubject me to long years of lingering torture, and deſtroy me at laſt, ſhould I not entreat him to diſpenſe with my taking his preſcription? Yet this is preciſely what happens, when a luckleſs man is adviſed, as the only means of redreſs againſt injuries, to apply to the laws of his country. 'It is an affair which from the very nature of it can only be ſettled by Chancery,' ſays my Counſellor; 'you muſt apply to that court

court undoubtedly; yet I own I can hardly adviſe it, for the coſts and time will be immenſe.'—'Calculate,' ſay I, 'the coſts, and the time.'—'Why,' returns my friend, 'as to the coſts, it is not eaſy to ſay what *they* may amount to among ſo many parties: and then, as for the *time*, it will be at leaſt *three* terms, but more likely *ſix*, nine, twelve, or fifteen, before your adverſaries will put in their anſwers; and if they are hoſtile, why it may be *three or four years*; and then your bill muſt be amended perhaps: and then, if any of the parties die among the three-and-twenty individuals whom you muſt make parties (people of all ages, from the old man of ſeventy-five to an infant born laſt week), why in that caſe, you know, you will have all the buſineſs to begin over again.' Not knowing, however, what elſe to do, after every other attempt fails which I have made to accommodate the affair, I venture into this labyrinth, and I engage

gage a man who calls himſelf *a Solicitor in Chancery*, to draw up my bill; and a learned Chancery Lawyer (a Special Pleader, I believe), *to ſettle it.* This done, and a heavy charge incurred, I deſire in all humility to read it, and find it not only devoid of common ſenſe, but going in no one point to my meaning, or to the truth; while the compoſition appears to me to be abſolutely nonſenſe. I object very much to this, and ſay, that where I am to appear before the Chancellor of Great Britain as *his orator*, I don't at all like to prate like a driveller—That it ſeems to me an inſult to talk, before the greateſt law officer, ſtuff that for falſehood and folly would be ſcouted in a company of haberdaſhers and toymen. I am anſwered with great indignation, that all bills in Chancery *are nonſenſe*—That it is the cuſtom to make them ſo, and that *they are better underſtood.* Such a poſition being incomprehenſible, and adding to the repugnance

pugnance with which I ſet out, I deſire to ſtay proceedings. My learned Chancery Lawyer allows me to do ſo, becauſe he begins to ſuſpect that my money and my patience may equally be at an end before I have gone another ſtep in this bleſſed pilgrimage: but he ſends me in his bill, and, to convince me that in Chancery as well as in almoſt every thing elſe '*c'eſt le premier pas qui coute*,' he preſents me with a charge of *only* ſeventy pounds. It is impoſſible for me to pay it—and he detains all the papers he had got into his hands on pretence of ſeeking redreſs for me——it being, it ſeems, a rule for lawyers never to reſtore papers till they are paid, though they have volunteered in the cauſe, and though the very detention of theſe documents may be in itſelf a greater evil than they undertook to cure, and may prevent its ever being cured at all.——Oh! my friend, after even this ſketch of a caſe *which has actually*

actually happened to me, which I know happens to thouſands, and is not by many degrees the moſt injurious trick of theſe *legal* banditti — where is the Engliſhman (not himſelf a lawyer) who can venture to make the proud boaſt that the law in his country is the palladium of liberty, and the protector of property? War, earthquake, peſtilence, famine, tempeſt, all the calamities of this beſt of all poſſible worlds, which we pray againſt in the liturgy, do not, I am convinced, occaſion more anguiſh to '*the poor creature of the earth*,' than theſe locuſts, which we ourſelves arm with ſtings and claws—becauſe it is the cuſtom.

" Don't wonder at this long diſſertation—I ſtill ſmart under the feſtering ſcratches of one of theſe fiends; and even in Switzerland, the lovelieſt, once the happieſt ſpot of Europe, I ſaw in the very few days I have this time been in it, a poor family literally deſtroyed

ſtroyed by a procureur. The ſame obnoxious profeſſional men are accuſed by the French nobility of having been the cauſe of, and chief gainers in, the revolution; which in truth I believe, as I think no other ſet of people could have done ſo much miſchief, brought down ſuch miſeries on a great nation, or turned what might have been comforts and bleſſings into plagues and curſes. Of theſe reptiles, therefore, it may be ſaid, they are like the viſitations of Pharaoh; and of our own country eſpecially, quoting a line of a great modern poet, we may ſay,

'And the land ſtank, ſo numerous was the fry.'

"And now I will for the preſent ceaſe to ſpeak of theſe authoriſed ſcalpers — theſe diſturbers of the living, who prey even upon thoſe that are no more—

"Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave."

"Ah!

"Ah!" exclaimed Lucy, half ſobbing as ſhe read over Althea's ſhoulder, "how ſad were the ſenſations, how bitter the recollections of my poor brother when he wrote thus!"

"Let us, however," ſaid Althea, from whoſe mind the moſt dreadful weight ſeemed to be removed—"let us, my Lucy, rejoice that he lived to write it; and we will try, my dear girl, thankfully to calm our ſpirits to follow the reſt of a narrative to us ſo intereſting."

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

. . . . . La mauvaiſe fortune avoit déja flétri ſon cœur; l'adverſité et le mépris avoient abattu ſon courage; et ſa fierté, changée en dépit amer, ne lui montroit que l'injuſtice et la dureté des hommes.

ALTHEA and Lucy proceeded then to read the narrative of Marchmont:

"It was the middle of September when I ſet forward alone from the aſylum I had for ſome days found in the Bourbonnois, but which I dared no longer truſt, for three national ſoldiers from the ſouth ſuddenly appeared; and though I happened to be wandering in the

the fields during their ſhort viſit, I found from my hoſt, on my return, that they only preceded a company of Marſeillois who were going to Paris, and I eaſily conceived that my ſtay was no longer ſafe either for the old man or myſelf. I left him not diſſatisfied with me; and I knew that, whatever he ſuſpected, it was not his intereſt, and did not ſeem to be in his nature, to betray me.

"With my haverſack on my back, I ſet out at eight o'clock of a warm and mild evening, taking no other precaution than to avoid the high-roads, by which the perſons I deſired to eſcape from directed their march. Though I knew nothing of the country, it was not difficult to do this where there are few incloſures, and the villages are thinly ſcattered among the mountainous tracks planted with vineyards, or ſhadowed with extenſive woods of ſweet cheſnut, affording at once ſhelter and food to

the

the formerly contented, though poor inhabitants.

"It was in a deep receſs of one of theſe woods that I ſlept on the firſt night of my pilgrimage; my knapſack forming my pillow, and the fallen leaves of the preceding year my mattreſs.—Were I a ſoldier, how much worſe might I have fared!—I awaked refreſhed with the earlieſt dawn of the morning, and followed an obſcure path leading through a yet wilder line of country, which ſeemed to have been made by the wood-cutters, and which I knew muſt conduct me to ſome habitation. After walking about four miles, I found myſelf near a few ſcattered houſes; and addreſſing myſelf to a vigneron, who was cutting ſpars at his door, I aſked for ſuch refreſhment as his cottage afforded; for which I offered to pay.

"The man made none of thoſe queſtions which, in a more populous diſtrict, might have compelled me to exert my

ingenuity at the expence of my veracity; but bade me walk in, and called his wife to ſet before me what ſhe had, which was cheſnut-bread, figs, and eggs. Did I not fare ſumptuouſly?—My friendly vigneron appeared to be one of thoſe honeſt ſimple creatures that walk ſtraight onward in their humble path, and preſerve their peace by looking neither to the right nor the left.—I ſat eating my vegetable meal on the turf ſeat at his door, ſhaded by a great elm older than the cottage, which it almoſt incloſed in its green arms; and ſaw him reclining at its foot, ſhaping, with care, the ſpars he had been cutting to anſwer ſome purpoſe in his vineyard. I remarked his open unthinking forehead, on which the few ſcattered locks were mingled with grey, but where care ſeemed to have nothing to do with the ſtrong ſunburnt lines; and I enquired of myſelf, if ſuch a being was not to be envied?—He, ſaid I, meditates nothing about

about Revolutions—he hardly underſtands the term. Under the old government he worked hard;—the new one has made to him (fortunate man!) no ſenſible change: he ſtill works hard for the daily bread he eats. He has heard that maſs is aboliſhed—that the religion of his country is annihilated; but *his* religion conſiſted merely in one ſimple and uniform routine of the duties neceſſary to enable his family to exiſt from one week to another. It was four leagues from his cabin to the neareſt chapel, and it was not of late years worth the while of the rich poſſeſſors of the neighbouring benefices to ſend or to come among the inhabitants of theſe five ſmall cabins in the extremity of the Bourbonnois, on the very edge of a mountainous tract of the mountainous Auvergne.

"*Is* it good then to be ſuch a being? When I reflect on the vice, the folly of cultivated, of poliſhed life, I am ready

to anſwer, that it *is*; but Roſalind's* remark recurs to me.—'It were then good to be a poſt!'——I heſitate, and conſider whether a human being, no more enlightened, riſes as many degrees as he ought to do in the ſcale of intelligent creatures deſigned to be

'—— only lower than the angels;'

and finally, whether I would exchange my ſenſibility, (I hate the word, it is ſo proſtituted) though you have told me, and I have ſometimes thought, I poſſeſſed almoſt a morbid degree of it, for the calm ſtupor of ignorance, for the ſtagnating content of an animal who in the human form is, in intellectual rank, hardly ſuperior to the cattle he drives a-field!

"I decide, that I would *not* exchange my ſenſe of exiſtence for his; yet I

* Roſalind in 'As You Like It.'

think

think there can be no doubt but that his is the happier.

"Are you tired of my ſpeculations? I hope not; for I told you my relation for ſome time was rather to be of what I thought than of what I ſuffered.

"I had a ſmall map of France with me, I mean as it was, for the diviſion into eighty-one departments puzzles and perplexes me—I took it out to conſider which way I ſhould turn.

"I found, in conſequence of the queſtions I aſked, that there were two roads at my option, without purſuing the immediate road to Toulon: one lay eaſtward through Auvergne, but it was a great circuit for one who was probably to journey almoſt entirely on foot: the other, which was indeed ſtill farther from the ſpot where I was, would lead me through a ſmall angle of the ci-devant Burgundy into Dauphiné, from whence I might make my way to the ſhore of the Mediterranean eaſtward of

Toulon. You will not recollect why I was compelled to prefer either of these to the usual route, unless I remind you of the state of Lyons at that period.—Not only that unhappy town, but every *grande route* that lay in a direct communication, it was absolutely necessary for so equivocal a character as I was to avoid.

"Having at length made my election, and determined to pass through Auvergne, I set out once more alone on foot, and, soon buried among the wild mountains and deep defiles of its eastern boundary, I travelled for some days, faring very hardly; for cottages were thinly scattered, and the only two chateaux I saw I forbore to approach.—The weather was now extremely warm, and I found myself too much fatigued to proceed in this way much farther; nor was it desirable to appear entirely like a wandering fugitive. I was therefore glad to meet with a sort of itinerant merchant

merchant of almoſt every commodity, either of neceſſity or finery, to French peaſants, who had juſt receïved a cargo of goods, which he was now going to ſell, againſt the cloſe of the vintage, among the lone villages of Auvergne, Guienne, and Provence. His only aſſociate was a boy of nine or ten years old; and I found, on talking to him, that, if he could meet a companion he could depend upon, he ſhould be rather relieved by travelling ſomewhat better guarded againſt accidents than he had been the preceding year, when he had been robbed, and narrowly eſcaped with his life, in a foreſt of the Limouſin. I know not what prejudiced him in my favour; but after I had been two days with him upon ſufferance, he propoſed to me to continue in his company, and to relieve him and the boy in driving their cart occaſionally; while at other times I ſhould take my turn to be conveyed in it.

"Though I foreſaw that this muſt oblige me to go ſome leagues out of my way, yet the ſcheme offered ſo many advantages that I cloſed with it; telling him, however, that when we came to Lodeve, in Languedoc, I ſhould be compelled to leave him, as I was going to the neighbourhood of Montpellier. My new friend was, as well as my honeſt Vigneron, one of thoſe uſeful but unreflecting beings, who, entirely occupied by their own affairs, look no farther. His ſole care was, whether the new order of things would, when the government was ſettled, affect his trade, *et ſi il fera toujours également bien ſes affaires.*—He told me how much money he had gained by his traffic in the ſpace of nine years, and deſcribed his little menage, the comforts of which had been greatly interrupted by his eldeſt ſon, a youth of ſeventeen, who till then uſed to travel with him, having been put in requiſition: he was himſelf, he ſaid, too old

for

for a ſoldier. He did not much underſtand what all the *tapage* was about, for, notwithſtanding the pains taken to *enlighten* the people of the country, there are parts of it where this illumination makes its way very incompletely.—Alas! the diſtant *flames* lend but a lurid and glaring light, and only ſerve to ſcorch and to deſtroy!

"Such a man was, however, much better adapted to my purpoſes, than a more intelligent or more informed fellow-traveller; and I endeavoured to increaſe the confidence he ſeemed ſo ſuddenly to place in me. I bore my own expences, which were not very heavy in ſuch a mode of travelling; and in a week we had proceeded about thirty leagues, every day more and more content with each other. He had no ſuſpicion that I was an Engliſhman. Nay, his notion of what an Engliſhman might be was altogether vague and confuſed. He only knew that the French and

Engliſh were often at war together; that he had a brother and two uncles who were either killed by them, or died in the armies ſerving againſt them; but where theſe hoſtile people lived, or whether they were Turks or Jews, he was not very clear, though he had heard from the prieſt who had the care of his conſcience and his wife's, that they were heretics, and would infallibly go to the Devil. He knew, however, that *ils faiſoient bien leurs affaires ici bas*, for he had gained a great deal of money by ſelling knives, ſciſſars, watch-chains, buckles, and many other ſuch articles, the manufacture of theſe remote people; and he regretted that *the new order of things* had put an entire ſtop to his commerce in that line; which, together with his being compelled to take all payments in aſſignats, that every day became more and more depreciated in their value, gave him a ſuſpicion, that *the new order of things* was leſs favourable

able to him than the old. His wife, he ſaid, was furious againſt the *Patriotes*, and that ſhe had incurred great riſk of being denounced to the Municipality of the diſtrict; but her ſon's being forced to the army, and *his* own authority, who had inſiſted on her ſtifling her opinions, had hitherto kept them unmoleſted in their houſe: '*Et après tout, Monſieur*,' ſaid he—'*pourquoi nous perdrons nous pour une différence d'opinion?—Qu'eſt-ce que tout cela me fait, pourvu que je faſſe toujours bien mes affaires**?'—I had ſeen almoſt enough to think as I ſaid, when I anſwered—'*Mon ami, tu as raiſon*†.'

"If *his* reflections troubled himſelf or me but little, mine were not ſo eaſily ſubdued.—Alas! how often did they

* And, after all, why ſhould we riſk being undone for a difference of opinion? What are all thoſe matters to me, provided I can but continue to proſper in my buſineſs?

† My friend, you are right.

return towards England, and the dear family I had left there! How often did I aſk when, or if ever, I ſhould be reſtored to them, and the liberty, which alone I coveted, *of breathing in peace and ſecurity my native air.*

"We had now traverſed Auvergne, and, continuing on the eaſtern boundary of Guienne, Caille (for ſo was my *ami du voyage* called) had ſome debts to receive at the town of Severac, that were likely to detain him a day or two; but he was impatient to be *inſtallé*, at Pezenas, on a certain day, when there was to be a fair, at which he uſually made conſiderable profit. As he could travel on his little bidet much quicker than with his caravan, and as he had by this time the moſt aſſured reliance on my integrity and care, he deſired I would go ſlowly on, accompanied by the boy, with his moveable warehouſe; and he would himſelf overtake us in a day or two.

"We

"We proceeded, therefore, from Severac to the banks of the Tarn, which I failed not to apoſtrophiſe—

'Tarn! how delightful flow thy willow'd waves!'

but I loſt the reſponſive rhyme, in being compelled to change the next line for—

'But, ah! they fructify a land of—Lunatics.'

"At St. Rome, where we reſted half a day, I ſtrolled into the Church, an old, gloomy, gothic building, the firſt I had examined ſince I left Paris.

"There had been ſoldiers quartered in it occaſionally, as they paſſed through the town; and almoſt every part of its furniture as a ſacred edifice had been carried away. It had alſo been made uſe of as a ſort of workſhop for the women, who were employed, either voluntarily or by requiſition, to make tents and military clothing: but now it was quite deſerted

deſerted and empty; and as by the diminiſhed light of evening I caſt my eyes along the arched avenues and dilapidated choir, now vocal no more, I thought I had never before felt a more painful ſenſation than this half-demoliſhed church impreſſed on my mind.—I liſtened to the wind that ſighed round the maſſy pillars, till I could almoſt have perſuaded myſelf the diſturbed ſpirits of the dead murmured, from the ruined ſepulchres on each ſide, maledictions againſt the barbarous intruders; and that

'. . . . . the gloomy aiſles,
Black, plaſter'd, and hung round with ſhreds of 'ſcutcheons,
And tatter'd coats of arms, ſent back the ſound
Laden with heavier airs from the low vaults
And manſions of the dead!'

"Nor could I think without a mixture of indignation and regret, how often I had ſeen ſuffering humanity relieved

lieved by pouring out its ſorrows at the foot of thoſe altars which were now levelled with the duſt; and how many ſolitary pilgrims, who now dared not enter the violated walls, I uſed to obſerve aſking, in theſe ſanctuaries, either the forgiveneſs, or the bleſſings of Heaven.

"It may be urged, that many of the perſons who were formerly to be ſeen from morning till night, in the churches of Roman Catholic countries, proſtrate before the image of a favourite ſaint, or ſitting or kneeling in ſome obſcure corner, loſt to the world and abſorbed in penitence and prayer, were guilty of neglecting their families, and of a ſinful waſte of the time which would have clothed and fed them.—This may be true. But, alas! many of theſe poor creatures were of thoſe, who on earth had neither relatives nor children to love, nor any ſocial duties to fulfil.—Ah! who that has ever felt or dreaded that cold and dreary vacancy of the heart, can

can help lamenting, that in these asylums of penitence and piety the solitary mourner, whom the world deserts, finds no longer a relief by pouring out his sorrows before his God, and contemplating the representations given by human art of the sufferings of the Saviour of the World, by whose merits these poor and desolate children of affliction look forward to a future state of retribution!

"Impressed with these melancholy thoughts, I proceeded on my journey. We passed the river Sorgue the next day; and as I walked slowly on a bye road that was not far from the banks of the stream, I saw a chateau which excited my curiosity, because it appeared to be entirely deserted, and because it reminded me of Eastwoodleigh. I had time enough before me, and approached it. The situation, on a rising ground embosomed in trees, and on one side looking towards high and varied moun-

tains,

tains, was ſingularly beautiful; but, when I entered the houſe, I found that it was, as I had imagined, quite without inhabitants. In many places the croiſées had loſt their glaſs, and no furniture remained. The doors were all open—ſome fallen from their hinges; and no living creature appeared to exiſt within its walls, ſave a bat or two (which I had probably diſturbed by my intruſion at that early hour of the morning, for it was before ſun-riſe) flitting through the high vacant apartments. The dead ſilence of this forſaken manſion was chilling and depreſſive, the beauty of the ſite made its deſertion ſeem the more to be regretted; and though I was ignorant even of the names of the former poſſeſſors of the place, I felt diſpoſed to lament them as if they had been my friends!

"I wandered into the garden; it had been laid out in the Engliſh taſte, or what

what the French conſider as ſuch, but ſo long neglected, that the trees were run into wildneſs, preferable perhaps in point of beauty to their more regular ſtate. Towards the extremity, the cedars, cypreſſes, bay and Portugal laurels were grown into an almoſt impenetrable ſhade. I made my way among them—till the river broke ſuddenly upon me, brightening in the ſun now juſt riſen above the horizon.—Little were the ſenſations of my mind reſpondent to this burſt of brilliancy!—I followed a graſſy path that led along the river's edge, half hid by weeping willow. Trout were ſpringing from the cryſtal waves, which were indeed ſo clear that I could diſtinguiſh every pebble at the bottom, and every minnow that wandered among them. The path I was in was terminated by a ſort of ſummer-houſe of lattice-work, and the *treillage* with which it was covered was the

the paſſion flower*, now in luxuriant bloom, ſpangling with its large and radiant ſtars the dark palmated leaves that embowered every part of the lattice, and hung in elegant feſtoons from the windows, which looked immediately down on the water, while the odorous flowers were

'Waſting their ſweetneſs on the deſert air.'

"I ſat down in this arbour of fragrance, and liſtened to the rippling of the current. A ſpot more calculated for the indulgence of the moſt delicious viſions can hardly be imagined, and I, alas! am but too prone to indulge them. For awhile the ſad ſpirit of preſentiment yielded to the beauty of the place. Evils, whether real or apprehended, which might well

'Shade every flower, and darken every green,'

* Paſſiflora cærulea.

were,

were, for a ſhort moment, ſuſpended. I ſaw myſelf in *ſuch* a ſcene with one, who alone of all the world would make me happy in *any*, and who would herſelf feel and delight in the beauties of a ſpot ſo lovely—

'Je la voyois partout, entre les fleurs et la verdure;'

and I was loſt in a dream of Elyſium, from which I felt it a ſort of outrage to be recalled, as I ſoon was by the voice of the boy, who was alarmed by my ſtay.

"Slowly and reluctantly I rejoined him; and as it was not eaſy to recall my thoughts from the place, I enquired if he knew to whom it had belonged, and why it was deſerted. The boy knew nothing; but at a little cabaret on the edge of a vineyard about a league farther, I heard, on aſking the ſame queſtion, that it had been the property of a ci-devant Duke, but for many years preceding

preceding the Revolution had been rented by Engliſh families.

"Afterwards, as I journeyed on, I recollected that Sterne, in one of his letters, talks of a houſe he inhabited on the banks of the Sorgue, where, in a pavilion, they might fiſh for trout from the windows. This, perhaps, was the very reſidence he deſcribed.—Alas! how changed, ſince his animated pen depicted it, are all but the local charms of this country!

"This change had, ſince I entered Guienne, gradually become more viſible; and many forſaken dwellings, as well as that I had left, had brought many ſad recollections to my mind.

"There was then a time when an Engliſhman, driven like me from his own country either by his own improvidence or the wicked perſecution of others, might have found here ſuch an aſylum as would have left him but little to regret; for who, that was not rooted

by

by the moſt obſtinate prejudices to the ſoil, would heſitate to prefer this lovely climate, and this lovely country, even though he muſt quit all the ſociety he has been uſed to (and indeed ſociety of all ſorts), to the ſummer verdure and boaſted freedom of England—when on the other ſide of the account he may ſee through the country fogs, bailiffs and attorneys dogging him, and a not very diſtant view of a priſon for life terminating the proſpect? Whoever has had, as a diſtreſſed man, much to do with the money-getting and money-ſaving part of the Britiſh nation, will not talk in a very elevated ſtrain of its liberal minds and noble ſpirits in excluſion of all others. That there are many among them who are, though very high in the commercial, as eminent in the moral world, is undoubted; but for the bulk of thoſe who have been brought up over account-books to conſider money as the firſt good, I know not if any

country

country has leſs to boaſt of as to their genuine liberality and enlargement of mind than England.

"It can as little be denied, that no where is he who is ſtruggling to riſe, or he who has fallen from his rank, kept down with more inveterate malignity, more over-bearing pride, than in England.—There it is, that he who is once able to make a figure, and is eſteemed rich, ſees all the crimes forgotten by which he became ſo. There the profligate penſioner, the titled paraſite, the plunderer of his own country or of any other, and even the private robber who has addreſs enough to rob within the pale of the law, is not only tolerated but reſpected. Let every man who is compelled to leave his native land recollect all this, and leave behind him prejudices and local attachments that make a great part of the miſeries of life.

"Oh, Everſley! my imagination, to which you have often told me I too much

much give the reins—my imagination repreſents to me how happy, how ſupremely happy I could be in ſuch a place as I have juſt deſcribed, with my family—with . . . . . Ah! dear and cruel remembrance!—It ſeemed made for the retreat of thoſe who have leſs taſte for the artificial pleaſures of the world, than for the ſimple unwearying delights that nature ſo bountifully offers in a climate like this. Might not the loveliеſt and moſt elegant of minds have here been content, nay happy, in her favourite purſuits; and have found

'. . . . . rich amends
For a loſt world in ſolitude and love?'

"But I wander wildly indeed from my narrative, to which it is more than time to recall my pen, though I have very little to ſay till I reached Lodeve, where I took a reluctant leave of my Marchand de Balle, to whoſe accommodation I had

had been obliged for protection and conveyance during near three weeks, and for a journey of above seventy leagues. We parted, well satisfied with each other. I had still a long and hazardous route before me; and, from the hourly observations I made, I found that the risk I had already run was nothing in comparison of that I must probably encounter before I could reach the residence of my venerable relation De Lavergnac, of whose safety every thing I now heard and saw made me entertain a thousand doubts.

"Towards the troubled scene into which, from motives of gratitude and affection, I was determined to throw myself, I looked not with fear, for to me life seemed every day less and less desirable, but with the same kind of reluctance (though heavier) that I used to feel, when I have been compelled to quit the country to attend in London, on business, the wretches who

either perſecuted my poor father, or pretended, while they were entangling him the more, to deliver him from perſecution. I remembered how in my early youth I have waited for hours and days in the dark caverns of iniquity, called lawyers' chambers, where the very air ſeemed to be infected by the poiſon of the reptiles who inhabited them, and where the regiſters of the victims they had devoured, or were devouring, were the only furniture of the walls. I remembered how, while I appeared to liſten to their jargon, I often failed to comprehend it; while my mind had fled back to the ſcenes I had left—ſcenes which I now indeed poſſeſs in idea only; for Sir Ralph Gunſtone and his emiſſaries had touched them, and Robeſpierre and his agents are not more deſtructive and more cruel.

"To places where theſe latter had carried death and deſolation, I however bent my courſe; much doubting, as I approached

approached Lavergnac, whether I was not too late to be of the leaſt uſe to the poor old Baron, who could hardly, I thought, have remained there unmoleſted, even if he had ſubmitted (which I did not believe probable) to temporize with the ruffians he could not reſiſt.

"As alone I traverſed a mountainous and woody tract, through which the river Gardon wanders to meet the Rhone, I felt the cruel contraſt between the delicious quiet and independence I ſeemed here to enjoy, and the miſeries that awaited me where my ſpecies, and even my countrymen, were collected in the ſad taſk of defence againſt violence, or the wretched one of offence towards others: for, from what I had lately learned on my way, I found Toulon was in poſſeſſion of the Engliſh, and I thought highly probable what I afterwards found to be true, that if De Lavergnac yet lived, he had fled thither."

At this moment the friends were interrupted by Amelia Marchmont, who came in exceſſive agitation to tell them, that the farmer, of whom her mother rented the houſe, had juſt been to receive his monthly rent; and ſitting down to proſe in the ſort of half-intelligent way that ſuch men generally talk in, he had told her with ſtrange circumſtances, which it was difficult to credit, of the evacuation of Toulon, ſuch as it had been related in a country paper which he had juſt ſeen. To this man the ſcene was remote, and the intereſt weak; for he conſidered only how it might, by prolonging the war, prolong or increaſe the taxes he already grumbled to pay. Of Mrs. Marchmont's ſenſations he had no conception; nor could he imagine why, having eagerly ſeized on the firſt word he had uttered about Toulon, ſhe had liſtened in breathleſs ſilence to the report he made from the newſpaper, growing pale and paler as he proceeded,

till

till she fell back lifeless in her chair. The farmer then rang the bell for help; and Mrs. Marchmont was but just restored to life when Lucy, and with her Althea, hurried to relieve and console her.

CHAP. IV.

Quel traits me préſentent vos faſtes,
Impitoyables conquérans?
Des vœux outrès, des projets vaſtes,
Des Rois vaincus par des tyrans;
Des murs que la flamme ravage,
Des vainqueurs fumans de carnage.

WHAT happineſs to Althea, as well as to the ſiſters of Marchmont, to be enabled to reſtore his mother to hope, and indeed to life, by ſhewing her the letter, which aſſured, beyond a doubt, his ſafety!

As ſoon as they had gone through the preceding pages of his letter, and by that means convinced Mrs. Marchmont

that

that he was, when he wrote it, in ſo much ſecurity, as to be able to reflect calmly on, as well as to relate diſtinctly, the circumſtances of his paſt danger; her own good ſenſe and ſolicitude to hear the reſt, aſſiſted her to compoſe her ſpirits, and ſhe liſtened anxiouſly, though ſilently, to the ſequel of his letter.

Continuation of Marchmont's Letter.

"After ſome perils, and a great deal of fatigue, I arrived at what was once the Chateau de Lavergnac.

"You have heard me ſay it was never a very large or ſplendid ſtructure, for it was built by the ſon of that Marchmont who, preferring his loyalty to his country, was an exile, or, as we ſhould now ſay, an emigrant with James the Second; and who was infinitely more fortunate than moſt of the followers of that un-

happy prince by marrying an heireſs of Languedoc, and being in favour with the French monarch! But though the houſe, leſs magnificent than commodious, rather reſembled the old-faſhioned but comfortable manſion of an Engliſh country gentleman of moderate fortune, than the ſeat of a French nobleman, it was, when I had viſited it before, a reſidence which might have ſatisfied any man not extremely faſtidious; and the baſtide that belonged to it, contained every thing that could create plenty and convenience in a country eſtabliſhment. The vineyards around it produce wine of a remarkably excellent quality; and olives, capers, oranges, and white mulberries, formed the boundaries of the enclo-ſures.

"In ſome, the great American aloe gave a new and ſingular feature to the landſcape, while it formed an admirable fence; and firs, pines, and cheſnuts, ſhaded

ſhaded and mitigated the glow of the too rich and luxurious ſcenery.

"Such was the place when I laſt ſaw it—What it was now I will leave you to imagine as a proprietor of land, when I tell you it had been ſeized and ſold as a national domain, to one who had formerly been a workman on the eſtate. The man, probably becauſe he believed his tenure precarious, had turned every thing into preſent money. The houſe was without furniture—a part of it only was inhabited by a peaſant and his family. The grounds which my venerable and worthy old friend had ornamented and cultivated as much for his pleaſure as his profit, were now by their mercenary uſurper applied wholly to the latter purpoſe. The particulars of this cruel devaſtation I had no means, nor indeed any heart, to enquire. It was not without great precaution, and many difficulties, that I learned the fate of the Baron and his family, which, as I believe

you know, conſiſted of the old Baron, his only ſon, and his grandſon, a young man of two-and-twenty, married in ninety-two to a young Swiſs lady.

"I trembled as I at length heard their deſtiny. Monſieur de Lavergnac had emigrated at the end of 1793. His father, the old Baron, and his ſon, who was called the Chevalier de Remiremont, remained at Lavergnac. The latter had quitted his regiment, of which a great part had emigrated, and thought he might be allowed to attend on the declining age of his grandfather, who took no part in public affairs from the moment that he ſaw of how little uſe he could be, and who was ſo univerſally beloved in his neighbourhood, that for the firſt four years of the convulſions that ſhook France he had remained reſpected and unmoleſted. At his expreſs deſire the engagement the Chevalier had made with Mademoiſelle ..... of Lauſanne was completed. It had not long

long taken place when the fatal intelligence reached the Baron of the death of his ſon in Germany, and he was in the ſame week driven from his houſe. For ſome time a faithful ſervant, who had grown rich by his bounty, ſheltered him; while the Chevalier and his wife endeavoured, at his earneſt entreaties, to eſcape into Switzerland, and nothing has ſince been heard of them. The Baron, laden with years and ſorrow, loſt no part of his fortitude; and he ſeemed to have been preſerved by the particular intervention of Providence, till the period when Toulon being in poſſeſſion of the Engliſh, the venerable fugitive took refuge within its walls; and there he was ſtill ſuppoſed to be when one of his old domeſtics, to whom I made myſelf known, gave me this account.

"There I determined to ſeek him—though I dreaded a meeting, for what miſery had we not reciprocally to relate! But I hoped to be of uſe to him; to

ſupply to him the ſon he had loſt, the grandſon whom his tenderneſs for this laſt branch of his family had compelled to conſult his own ſafety. I obtained admittance then into the town, and made myſelf known to the Baron. I cannot deſcribe our meeting; but he ſeemed ſtill to encourage hope of better days, which I who was ſo much younger dared hardly at that juncture entertain. The reſpect that the virtues and age of De Lavergnac had commanded, even from ferocious republicans, followed him. The Engliſh ſhewed him every attention their circumſtances admitted; and as it was ſoon known who I was, and what had been my purpoſe in paſſing at ſo great a hazard through France, I was noticed by the Britiſh commanders, and placed in a commiſſary's office, where, if honeſt men *can* riſe in ſuch employments, I might perhaps have riſen to a more profitable poſt. It was in ſuch a hope I wrote to my mother; and while I flattered

I flattered myſelf that I might become uſeful to her and my family, I had the ſatisfaction of ſoothing the ſorrows of the venerable Baron, and returning a part of thoſe obligations I owed him.

"Alas! this power and theſe hopes were but of ſhort duration. You know the fatal cataſtrophe at Toulon! I will not attempt to deſcribe a ſcene, of which language muſt fail in conveying an adequate idea. My greateſt ſolicitude was to carry off my poor old friend to the Engliſh ſhips. In that I ſucceeded; and having ſeen him ſafe, I could not bear to remain inactive on board, while danger and death ſurrounded ſo many of my countrymen, and ſtill more the wretched inhabitants of the town that had received them. I went off, therefore, again from the man of war to the ſhore with a party of ſailors, who were employed in delivering the unhappy people from the fury of the republicans, and, what was ſtill worſe, of the galley

ſlaves.

ſlaves. I had the good fortune to help in ſaving, at leaſt from immediate deſtruction, above twenty of theſe luckleſs victims; and I was with the ſame ſet of active ſeamen returning a third time to the ſhore, when our boat was blown out of the water by the exploſion of one of the ſhips. You remember that I was always a good ſwimmer; I was not wounded, though ſo ſtunned, that I think it muſt have been a minute or two before I recollected myſelf, and made my way by ſwimming to the ſhore, where I almoſt inſtantly received a piſtol ſhot, and fell ſenſeleſs on the beach. The man who fired at me probably believed me dead; a belief to which I undoubtedly owed my preſervation; for he in all likelihood went to wreak his vengeance in ſome other quarter, and I found myſelf alone and bleeding on the ſhore. The flames that were raging around, the groans of the dying, the ſhrieks of the priſoners, and the ſavage ſhouts of triumph,

recalled

recalled me to a conſciouſneſs of my ſituation. I tried to get up, though I knew that to eſcape was impoſſible, and that my death was inevitable; but when I would have ariſen, I found myſelf ſo weak from loſs of blood, and my clothes ſo heavy with the water, that I was quite unable to ſtand; I therefore crawled towards a broken boat that lay a few yards farther, and, lying down beneath it, prepared, as well as the confuſed ſtate of my head would let me, for the death that awaited me."

Mrs. Marchmont, as well as her daughters, and Althea who had undertaken to read, all found themſelves too much affected at this paſſage to be able to proceed for ſome time. The mother could not hear without agony of the danger her ſon had been in, though certain that he had finally eſcaped it.

As ſoon, however, as they had all a little recovered themſelves, Lucy undertook

dertook to relieve the faltering, trembling Althea, and thus went on:

MARCHMONT'S LETTER CONTINUED.

"The pain of my wound prevented my losing all sense of my condition, as I think I should otherwise have done from weakness and loss of blood. I saw, amidst horrors which are not to be described, the morning break, which I concluded was the last I should ever see. Soon after my spirits gradually forsook me; I thought with anguish on what my poor mother and my sisters would suffer, when they should know that I was no more.

"One other person, and you, my dear long-tried friend, flitted before my departing senses. I murmured out an eternal adieu, and my last prayer was for the happiness of the *six* beings, who only were very dear to me on earth, and

for

for whoſe ſake alone I regretted that I was now to leave it.

"I was unconſcious how long I lay in this ſtate of ſtupor; but when I was recalled to ſenſe, I found myſelf in a cart with three other bodies, which they were going to bury. I ſpoke, or at leaſt attempted it. The ſoldier who drove the cart lifted me up, and aſked who I was? I had not recollection enough to conſider what it would be moſt conducive to my ſafety to paſs for, and anſwered in a faint voice that I was an Engliſhman.

"From nine out of ten among the people into whoſe hands I had fallen, it is certain that this anſwer, far from ſerving as a protection, would have brought upon me a ſtroke of the bayonet, which would have ended my life at once. But it happened that the man to whom I ſpoke was an old invalid; he had been a priſoner to the Engliſh in the American war; had been cured of a wound

wound he received in the action; well treated, and exchanged as ſoon as he was able to move. To this circumſtance I owe my life. The old ſoldier remembered his own ſituation, and pitied mine. My accent convinced him I was what I repreſented; and inſtead of deſtroying me he took me into a houſe, and, having placed me on ſome ſtraw on the floor, and given me ſome wine and water, which ſeemed to revive me ſo as that I could diſtinctly ſpeak, he left me to the care of a woman who did not ſeem ſo humane as he was, and went to finiſh his mournful buſineſs of burying the dead, promiſing to return as ſoon as he could, and to bring or ſend a ſurgeon.

"The pain and weakneſs I endured again became exceſſive; and again I believed myſelf dying, and indeed wiſhed to die rather than to linger, as ſeemed but too probable, in tortures for many days, only to periſh at laſt. The uncommon

common ſtrength of my conſtitution ſtill reſiſted the complicated miſchiefs that had fallen upon me. It was not till night that the friendly old ſoldier returned: he adminiſtered all he could with the greateſt humanity, and himſelf extracted the bullet that was lodged between my ſhoulder and collar bone: but though it had not penetrated very deep, his want of ſkill put me to inconceivable torture, and the muſcles were ſo torn in the operation, that a great part of the danger I was afterwards in aroſe from that circumſtance.

"If you ever received my former letter, you already know the imminent peril I was in during my impriſonment; for though I was at firſt conſidered as an Engliſhman, one of the peaſants who had ſeen me at Lavergnac when I was in ſearch of the Baron, came into the corps that occaſionally guarded the priſoners; and this man depoſed, that he knew me to be a relation of the Baron's,

and

and a Frenchman. In conſequence of which I ſhould probably have died on the ſcaffold with a number of other wretched victims, if the young ſurgeon, of whom I ſpoke in that letter, had not added to the friendly care by which he ſaved my life, the ineſtimable bleſſing of liberty which he contrived to give me at the utmoſt riſk of periſhing in my place. I cannot help remarking, my friend, that while one ſet of profeſſional men have occaſioned to me all the miſeries of my life (I mean men of the law), from thoſe of *another* profeſſion I have received the moſt liberal kindneſs, the moſt remarkable proofs of diſintereſted friendſhip; and it is to a medical man I owe the exiſtence, which, probably, if ever I reach my native country, the other deſcription of men will contrive ſtill to embitter. Alas! dear Everſley, amidſt the horrors of a French priſon—among ſtrangers and enemies—I ſaw nothing ſo hideous to *my* eyes, ſo deteſta-

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ble to *my* feelings, as Vampyre and another wretch of the ſame ſpecies: I ſuffered nothing ſo painful as what *their* perſecution had in England inflicted upon me, and on thoſe whoſe peace is dearer to me than my own. Releaſed at once from impriſonment, and the fear of death, and furniſhed by my generous and amiable friend with money enough for my perilous journey, I implicitly followed his directions, and made my way into Switzerland. A journal of my ſtratagems, and hazards, would make my letter too long, and ſometimes I am willing to hope that we may meet in England, and once more enjoy the delight of confidential friendſhip. . . . . To that time I will refer a regular hiſtory of my wanderings; and you will at the preſent period of my narrative imagine me arrived at Bienne in ſafety, yet extremely fatigued, and at a ſeaſon when this country is ſometimes paſſable only in the beaten road. However, to

ſtay

ſtay at Bienne was impoſſible—I therefore merely delivered the letters given me by my friend Deſlormes, which procured me a paſſport from the magiſtrates, and a farther ſupply of money, and I determined to proceed to Baſle.

"I will check the diſpoſition I even now feel to deſcribe the valley of Munſter—to tell you how, in paſſing it, I ſometimes forgot the rigors of winter, even all I had ſuffered, and all I dreaded, and was loſt in admiring the wildneſs and ſingularity of the ſcene. I paſſed a night in one of the deepeſt excavations of its rocks in ſuch perfect repoſe, that not a peaſant girl came with her little offering, or little oriſon, to *our lady of the cave*, a rude image held in great veneration by the people of the country, which is placed in a niche cut in the rock at the farther end, over a ruſtic altar table of the ſame materials.

"To

"To this night's lodging, however, for it was exceſſively cold, I owed the pain I felt the next day in my ill-healed wound. It was indeed ſo acute, that I doubted for ſome time whether any exertion of reſolution would enable me to go on. I would now have been glad to meet any human being who could have informed me of my way, or have aſſiſted my feeble ſteps to purſue it; yet it was long ſince I had avoided meeting my own ſpecies.—Strange and wretched perverſion of the ſocial propenſities of our own nature, when the pilgrim is compelled to fly from his fellow man!

"I ſhould now, at any riſk, have ſpoken to whomever I had met, even a republican ſoldier of France; but I ſaw no one as I walked, or rather crept along, for about three miles towards the Pierce Pertuis*—then faint with pain, I be-

* A rock, through which an arched way is cut to facilitate the communication between Baſle and Bienne.

came

came unable to continue my route, and with little hope of regaining ſtrength enough to get to any place of ſhelter that night; in which caſe it was moſt likely I ſhould periſh with cold before morning. I ſat down under one of thoſe rude cliffs that bound the river Birze, as it haſtens through the valley among narrow ſtraits formed of incumbent rock. A ſtupor ſtole faſt over my wearied ſenſes, and blunted the pain which I had felt from the irritation of my wound; and I ſhould probably have ſunk wholly from inanition, weakneſs, and that hopeleſs languor that is often the effect of bodily pain and fatigue extended beyond the ſtrength of the ſufferer, had I not towards evening been rouſed from this ſtate of half annihilation by a Swiſs peaſant, who, croſſing one of thoſe many ruſtic bridges thrown over the Birze, ſaw me, and, approaching, ſpoke to me in the patois of the country. I was unable to anſwer. He

ſat

ſat down by me, and with humanity and good ſenſe that would have done honour to more poliſhed life, endeavoured to rouſe me to exertion. After ſome time he ſucceeded; and though he has ſince told me he believed me to be a French patriot, which at that period was a name dreaded by many of the Swiſs, he generouſly forgot his prejudice or his fear, in conſideration of my calamitous ſituation; and putting me upon a ſmall horſe, with which he was conveying ſome neceſſaries for his family from Bienne, he walked by its ſide, encouraging me with the moſt patient pity to endure the preſent evil in the aſſurance of immediate relief.—It was, however, with great difficulty, and at a late hour of the night, that I reached his hoſpitable cottage, in the village of Lauffen.

"Here the repoſe I enjoyed, and kindneſs I received from theſe honeſt people, rare, but I hope not unique,

ſpecimens of ancient Swiſs hoſpitality and humanity, ſoon reſtored me—not to eaſe, for my wound was ſtill extremely painful at times—but to ſo much ſtrength of mind and body, as enabled me to conſider what I could and ought to do: and the recollection of my mother and my ſiſters, of the cruel ſuſpenſe they muſt be in, of the addition their fears for my life and ſafety muſt make to their other ſorrows, determined me, whatever perſonal inconvenience might ſtill await me in England, to return thither. My mother had continually, in my half-delirious ſtate from pain and long want of ſleep, been preſent to me. Now more perfectly in poſſeſſion of my ſenſes, all the ſcenes I had formerly witneſſed in England with her returned to my remembrance. Her hardly-acquired fortitude when the delicacy of her frame ill ſupported the dignity of her mind; her mild ſubmiſſion to evils, heavy becauſe inflicted by men; her patient deſcent

ſcent from the place ſhe had been accuſtomed to, and had ſo good a right to fill; and her quiet acquieſcence under every oppreſſion but thoſe which threatened to deprive her of her children; and, as theſe impreſſions were renewed, the dread of all ſhe might have endured in my abſence of pecuniary hardſhip, became almoſt inſupportable.—Ah, my dear Everſley! I ſometimes reproach myſelf with cowardice in having ever left her, though at her own earneſt entreaty——

'Oppreſs'd by a baſe world, perhaps ſhe bends
Beneath the weight of other ills than grief;
And, deſolate, implores of Heaven the aid
Her ſon ſhould give!'

"Alas! the reſolution to return to England was more eaſily made than executed. To my generous hoſt, however, I owed another kindneſs in addition to all thoſe he had already ſhewn me. When he ſaw how uneaſy I was, and

(already knowing I was Engliſh) heard why I deſired to return to my native country, he undertook to conduct me himſelf to Fribourg, from whence he thought I might reach Hanover, and among Engliſhmen, whom I ſhould undoubtedly find there, obtain with leſs difficulty a conveyance to England.

"This plan then, as far as it depended on him, was immediately executed.—After ſtaying a day or two at Fribourg, I found myſelf well, and ſtrong enough to reſume my former method of travelling on foot. I parted with this honeſt and worthy man with regret, moſt ſincerely anxious for the time when I ſhould be able to repay him for all his kindneſs, and doubting, as I approached the country, where, ſince it was belonging to the King of England, I expected to meet many of my countrymen, whether I ſhould find, even among them, more generous minds, more friendly ſpirits, than I had been ſo fortunate as

to

to encounter in Deſlormes, and this man André Vanette. If I had ever felt a diſpoſition to indulge that national arrogance, and national prejudice, with which Engliſhmen in the middling or lower ranks of life are from their infancy impreſſed, I ſhould ſurely have diveſted myſelf of it in the obſervations I had now occaſion to make. But thrown by misfortune from the boſom of my country, I early learned to be a Citizen of the World.—In what obſcure corner of it, Everſley, ſhall *I* ever find a quiet aſylum?

"That, my dear friend, is an enquiry which it is not now a moment to make.—I haſten to conclude the little I have to relate.

"Imagine me then among Engliſhmen and Germans, nearly connected with them—myſelf a ſoi-diſant Engliſhman, but without recommendation, without acquaintance, without any means of aſcertaining what I was, or to whom I

belonged. My language indeed might have anſwered for my country; but as I ſpoke another equally well, and had evidently been rambling about the world; as I had paſſed through France at a time when ſuch a *trajet* ſeemed impoſſible to a man not well affected towards the then governors; as I called myſelf a gentleman, yet none of my connections ſeemed to *countenance* me; the perſons to whom I addreſſed myſelf (as I hoped, without baſeneſs, and certainly without the ſhadow of deception) ſeemed to ſuſpect me as an Avanturier; perhaps an Avanturier of a dangerous deſcription, with whom it would be unſafe for them to have any thing to do.—The repulſive coldneſs, the conſtrained half civility I was received with, ſoon taught me that I had but little to expect from the higher in power among thoſe, on whom *I thought* my being an Engliſhman, and of decided loyalty, might have given me ſome ſort of claim to what

what I ſolicited; which was, to be employed either in a civil or military capacity there, till I could, in ſome public truſt, be ſent to England. I had even fancied, that the knowledge I had acquired of the ſituation of France would have been uſeful; but I found that even my having been there was a crime, and laid me open to ſuſpicions either felt or *feigned*. I ſometimes thought that they were the *latter*, and aſſumed merely as an excuſe for the refuſal it was determined I ſhould generally experience. For, when once the perſons of *conſequence* had repulſed me, I found the ſame tone aſſumed by the reſt—and I was *bowed out* by the ſubalterns with even leſs civility than I had received from their maſters.—Among others whom it was my lot to meet with, was a nephew of Lady Silcheſter's deceaſed Lord———I muſt go back a little to relate the circumſtance and its conſequence.

"Do not imagine, my dear Everſley, that, when it appeared neceſſary for me to ſay *who* I was, I had ſpoken of my near relationſhip to that fooliſh, proud, unfeeling woman, as either a boaſt or a deſignation; but, when I named myſelf, a ſecretary who ſat with the great man I was talking to obſerved very coldly, that the late Lord Silcheſter had married a lady, whoſe other ſiſter was the wife of a Mr. Marchmont. This man, it ſeems, was a genealogiſt, and piqued himſelf upon the knowledge of all the intermarriages of the nobility; ſo that he might have been a very oracle to thoſe who hardly knew they had a grandfather, if to enquire had been their object, after they had once ſatisfied themſelves by being duly enrolled in the records of thoſe '*gentle hiſtorians**,

* Vide Burke's Letter to a Noble Lord.——This is, undoubtedly, an anachroniſm; for which the author can only apologize by ſaying, that it was impoſſible to find any other form of words equally adapted to her meaning.

who

who dip their pen in nothing but the milk of human kindneſs; who ſeek no further for merit than the preamble of a patent, or the inſcription of a tomb; with whom every man created a Peer, is firſt an hero ready made; who judge of every man's capacity by the offices he has filled—and the more offices the more ability; with whom every General Officer is a Marlborough; every Stateſman a Burleigh; every Judge a Murray, or a Yorke; ſo that men who alive were laughed at or pitied by all their acquaintance, make as good a figure as the beſt of them in the pages of Gwillim, Edmondſon, and Collins.'

"To this obſervation of the Commis, Mr. Platt, relative to Lady Silcheſter, I anſwered, without however feeling myſelf at all honoured by the alliance—'That it was true. The lady he ſpoke of was my mother's ſiſter.'

"I ſaw doubt hang on the countenances of both the great man and his ſecretary, or it was rather perhaps *fear*,

that if I could make out any ſuch noble connection, they ſhould feel themſelves compelled to do me ſome kindneſs. However that might be, my indignant ſpirit, which I had with difficulty ſubdued to the meanneſs of ſolicitation at all, now roſe againſt the degradation of being queſtioned either by the inſolent military man, or his cold-blooded underling.—I aroſe, and, forbearing with difficulty to expreſs what I thought, quitted the audience, with a reſolution to return to it no more.

"I had determined to ſet out once again either on foot or by the conveyance afforded by rivers, to make my way to Hamburgh, and from thence to England; but ſome preliminaries, not very eaſy to ſettle, were of neceſſity to be thought of, before I could, even in this cheap and independent manner of travelling, begin another journey.

"While I was deliberating how to act, I was met in the ſtreet by the great man's

man's ſecretary and the nephew of Lady Silcheſter, together with another young officer. It ſeemed as if the Commis, who I was ſure had regarded me with an evil eye when he had before ſeen me, was ſeeking an opportunity to detect me as an impoſtor; for he immediately addreſſed himſelf to Captain Melincourt, and ſaid, ſlightly touching his hat to me—'This, Captain Melincourt, is the Mr. Marchmont I mentioned to you.'—The military boy, who at firſt view appeared to be a great coxcomb, ſtared at me—'I have not the honour to know the gentleman,' ſaid he, with a cold drawl.—'I believe not,' anſwered I with more ſpirit than I ſuppoſe became my appearance; 'for I do not know that I ever ſaw you before.'—I was turning away, when the ſecretary, Mr. Platt, choſe to add—'And yet, Sir, I thought you had given yourſelf out for a relation by marriage to Captain Melincourt?'—'I given myſelf out, Sir?—

If you dare to aſſert *that*, I tell you, you utter a falſehood.—What, Sir! do you imagine that any circumſtances could urge me to ſay the thing that is *not?* or, if I *were* ſo degraded, that I ſhould deſcend yet a ſtep lower, in trying to derive any credit from accidental relationſhip to contemptible and inſignificant beings, only becauſe they bear titles?'——I then walked away, leaving the Commis and the Captain to digeſt this bruſquerie as they thought proper. They ſtood ſtill a moment, as if wondering that a poor man, a wanderer as I was, ſhould dare to reſent an inſult; while I returned to my obſcure lodging, not without feeling the neceſſity of calling to my aſſiſtance all my fortitude, or, rather, all thoſe reflections that teach it. I compared *myſelf*, the faculties of my own mind, and the power of enduring evil or of riſing above it, with the intellectual poſſeſſions of the two creatures who looked upon me with contempt; and

and I aſked myſelf, whether, deſtitute wanderer and houſeleſs ſtranger as I was, I would, for a moment, exchange ſituations with either of theſe paltry fellows? My heart proudly diſdained the queſtion; and, without beſtowing on them another thought, I was calmly renewing ſuch little preparations as I could make for my departure, which I meant to take that evening, when I ſaw enter the third perſon who had been in company with the Commis and Captain Melincourt. Though I had no other idea than that he came with a repetition of inſult, I received him as a gentleman; for *he* at leaſt had not yet offended me, and there was ſomething in his countenance and figure that prejudited me in his favour.

"He was a man about my own age, but appeared, by his diffident yet ingenuous manner, to have been but little converſant with the world. He was evidently embarraſſed how to begin the converſation,

converſation, which confirmed me in my idea, that he had ſome meſſage to deliver that he felt to be rude and brutal; for I did not imagine that the gentlemen who had ſpoken to me conſidered me of ſufficient conſequence to receive a *cartel* from men who fancied themſelves of ſo much.

"After ſome ſeconds of heſitation and confuſion, my viſitor thus explained himſelf:

"'I do not know, Sir, whether you will accept the apology it is neceſſary for a ſtranger to make, who comes without any introduction; but as your countryman, I wait upon you with offers of ſuch ſervice as I can render you. The moſt fortunate may have occaſion for the good offices of a *compatriot* in a ſtrange land. I underſtand you are far from your friends, and have eſcaped from France. You may be out of money to facilitate your return to England. Allow me to be your banker.—

My

My power as a younger brother, and a mere ſoldier of fortune, is not great; but ſuch as it is, I beg you will command it with as little ſcruple as I truſt you would do if we had long been friends.'

"Nothing could be ſo remote as was this addreſs from what I expected. It would be tedious to relate the whole dialogue that followed. I learned that my new acquaintance was a Captain Forreſter, one of the aides-de-camp to a general officer, and the younger ſon of the Earl of Stanwarden: that he was accidentally walking with Mr. Platt and Captain Melincourt when they met me, and was ſhocked at their unprovoked inſolence: 'I own,' ſaid he, 'I was pleaſed with the ſpirit you ſhewed, and not ſorry to ſee Platt mortified; for he is an arrogant and ſtupid fellow, preſuming on the office he fills, which, though the meaneſt abilities are adequate to its execution, he fancies gives him great

great dignity, and is a proof of profound wiſdom and uncommon genius. He is a ſolemn coxcomb. If he does but ſign a paſſport, or an order for forage, he aſſumes an air of the greateſt importance, and talks of the *laborious buſineſs* he is engaged in—the *prodigious fatigue* of his office—the *vaſt weight* of the affairs that lay on his ſhoulders. Over every thing he does, though it be only writing to his gardener in England, whom he pompouſly calls his homme d'affaires, he throws a veil of myſtery; ſo that any one who obſerved without knowing him, would conclude he was engaged in a correſpondence with Miniſtry of the utmoſt importance to his country—whereas he is probably only giving directions about the management of his cucumber beds for an early crop, or regulating the ſite of his melon frames; for this fungus is, like moſt ſuch ſort of men, very fond of the table. When he ſpeaks of himſelf it is always in the plural—'We

of

of the diplomatique corps—Perſons of a certain deſcription like *us*, entruſted by Government—We, the friends of Adminiſtration—To us, who are in the ſecret of all that—To *efficient* men of our department.' Such is the language of this conſequential ſecretary, who is alſo among thoſe who uſed to be called Croakers, but who have of late aſſumed the more tremendous title of Alarmiſts; inſomuch that I have ſometimes recommended it to him to recollect the fable of the boy and the wolf. To prove, however, at once, and exerciſe his ſagacity, he is continually diſcovering plots and conſpiracies—French agents, and lurking Jacobins: and it was probably ſome ſuch character that he intended to fix upon you.

"'When you left us juſt now, I could not help enquiring who you was? Platt anſwered, that you pretended your name was Marchmont—that it might be ſo for aught he knew, but that Captain Melincourt,

Melincourt, whoſe uncle had married a near relation of that family, did not know you; and that even if you were the perſon you pretended to be, he thought you of a very ſuſpicious character. There was a young fellow of that name in London,' ſaid he, 'a year or two ago. He was a writer for the bookſellers; and I was aſſured (for I have no time to read ſuch trifles myſelf), that there were ſentences in his books (I have no recollection of the name of them) that were to be diſcouraged. Such neceſſitous people running about Europe, writing their remarks, and promulgating and propagating their wild and impertinent theories juſt at this time, under the name of *travels*, or novels, are to be diſcouraged and repreſſed. I will have nothing to do with Mr. Marchmont, or *ſoi-diſant tel*; and I have adviſed my Lord not to give him the ſmalleſt countenance.'

"'You

" 'You believe him an impoſtor then,' ſaid I, 'and, thus impreſſed, think yourſelf juſtified in withholding from him the protection and aſſiſtance which he does not otherwiſe ſeem to have forfeited, and which as an Engliſhman he has an undoubted right to expect?'

" 'The ſecretary,' continued Captain Forreſter, 'gave me a look of contempt; told me I was a young man, but for a man of faſhion had ſtrange tramontane ideas — That he knew no claims but ſuch as aroſe from ſome ſervice to Government—That an Engliſhman whoſe principles he was not ſure of was to him no more than a Frenchman, or a Dutchman—That, in ſhort, he did not half like you, and thought the ſooner you left this place the better. Offended,' added my generous defender, 'with the overbearing impertinence of this official puppy, I determined to ſee you myſelf; and from our

ſhort

ſhort converſation I am already perſuaded, that you have the moſt undoubted claims to credit for all you have ſaid as to yourſelf, and certainly to every friendly office which the natives of the ſame country owe to each other when they meet at a diſtance from it.'

"From this moment," ſaid the continuation of Marchmont's letter, "from this moment the moſt friendly and unreſerved intimacy originated between me and Captain Forreſter, whom I found to be a man of the moſt ingenuous mind, the moſt elegant manners—which his reſerve, and even diffidence among ſtrangers, ſerve to render yet more pleaſing to thoſe few whom he eſteems. Theſe the goodneſs of his heart and the ſweetneſs of his temper attach to him moſt affectionately. Brave even to faulty raſhneſs, yet full of tenderneſs and humanity, he abhors the cold and cruel policy the views of which he is profeſſionally engaged to promote, and not

not unfrequently finds his candour and his good nature inſufficient to enable him to obſerve the forms of civility with the men with whom he is often obliged to aſſociate. Bred up, like many other younger ſons of the nobility, in the army, he is far from conſidering war as right and neceſſary becauſe it is his profeſſion; but, as an individual, his benevolence is continually exerted to mitigate its horrors, and to meliorate the condition of the ſoldiers under his command. His ſoldiers of courſe adore him, and yet there is not a company ſo well diſciplined as his—not one where puniſhment, or even reprimand, is ſo little neceſſary.

"I could write a volume, and yet not exhauſt this topic. I reſerve it, therefore, to the hour of our meeting, my dear Everſley, and proceed to tell you, that after a few days Captain Forreſter, from the confidence that ſubſiſted between us, was perfectly acquainted with

my

my ſituation, and the difficulties that were in the way of my returning to England: but he thought with me that I ought to brave thoſe difficulties; and by his aſſiſtance, for from ſuch a man I had no ſcruple to accept it, I am now on my way to Hamburgh.—Yet from the ſituation of public affairs at this moment I know not when I ſhall arrive there, or when get from thence. My late experience, dear Everſley, convinces me, that mankind are leſs under the influence of education and climate than we are generally taught to believe. To paſs over the demagogues of France, (men who are intoxicated with ſudden power, perverted by falſe ambition, or awed by terror), I ſpeak only of thoſe farther removed from the concuſſions of the great volcano. Of the two French ſurgeons, for example—one of them ſeemed glad to pronounce me in danger of dying, as if he thought it a general benefit that there ſhould be one Engliſh-

man

man (if I was one), or at leaſt one royaliſt, leſs in the world; while the other relieved and liberated me at his own imminent hazard. Yet theſe two men were both educated in the ſame profeſſion, and the ſame principles, under the ſame animating ſun: the one was proud, moroſe, vindictive, and a bigot to he knew not what chimæras; while the other was liberal-minded, generous, and humane, conſidering nothing but how he might do good to his fellow-men, whatever might be their country, their religion, or their politics. It is true that the latter of theſe was young, the other a man near fifty; and I believe, from all I have hitherto obſerved, that Lord Bacon's obſervation is but too juſt—

"Age improves rather in the powers of the underſtanding, than in the virtues of the will and affections."

"Shall

"Shall I ſay nothing of my *illuſtrious* Swiſs peaſant, André Vanette? who might indeed be termed

'A noble, of Nature's own creation!'

"the good Samaritan, who received me ſick and a ſtranger, who poured oil and wine into my wounds when ſo many others would have

'Againſt the houſeleſs ſtranger ſhut the door!'

"Yes! I will aſſert, that though I truſt Nature has ſcattered here and there ſuch hearts in *all* climates and countries, I never met with one in that rank of life at all to be compared to him in any part of the world.

"Let us, to follow this chain of thought, contemplate the characters of Captain Melincourt and Captain Forreſter, two men born with equal perſonal advantages, both of noble families, both younger ſons of nearly equal expectations,

tions, and both, after the ſame courſe of education, entering at the age of ſixteen into the army.

" Melincourt is effeminate, inſipid, ſelfiſh, and as inſolent as his indolence will allow him to be. He loves money, becauſe he can purchaſe with it pleaſures, of which his vacant mind is always in ſearch, though nothing has power to rouſe him long from the apathy of ſatiety. Sick of himſelf, yet loving nothing elſe, he lives in perpetual ſolicitude, leſs for the actual ſafety than the want of accommodation for that dear ſweet perſon of his; though ſo burdenſome is it, notwithſtanding all the moſt ſtudied indulgences, that, like the wretched Roman Emperor, he is almoſt ready to offer a premium to whoever could find ſomething that might give new intereſt to his mawkiſh exiſtence.

" What Forreſter is, the traits I have given you of his character may help you to imagine. If climate, education, or the

government under which they have lived, influenced the characters of men, ſurely theſe two could never ſo radically, ſo totally differ. I will hope, my friend, to make Forreſter known to you in England.——In England!——Alas! how many events may have happened there, to render my return thither the moſt painful moment of my life! I will not again, however, enter on ſuch diſquiſitions: they are uſeleſs, and would carry me too far.

"My dear and excellent friend, adieu! Wherever he is, your happineſs is among the firſt wiſhes of

"E. A. M."

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Già riede primavera
Col ſuo fiorita aſpetto;
Già il grato zeffiretto
Scherza fra l'erbe, e il fior—
——Tornan le frondi agli alberi,
L'erbette al prato tornano,
Sol non ritorna a me,
La pace del mio cor.

WHEN the mind of Mrs. Marchmont was as much compoſed as the nature of her ſituation and the remaining uncertainty would admit, ſome degree of tranquillity, however chaſtiſed by fear, was reſtored to every breaſt but that of Althea. For *her* there was not even

the ſemblance of repoſe to be found; for, releaſed from the extreme concern ſhe had felt for the life of Marchmont, ſhe now turned her thoughts to her future conduct in regard to him, and aſked herſelf, whether on his return it would be prudent or conſiſtent for her to reſide in the houſe which, whether his perſecutors allowed him always to be there, or drove him occaſionally into concealment, could not but be conſidered as his home. Yet how could ſhe propoſe quitting Mrs. Marchmont, becauſe her ſon was about to return to her? Althea was to this hour ignorant whether ſhe knew of Marchmont's attachment to her; for ſhe had never once mentioned, or even remotely hinted at it. That Lucy was in poſſeſſion of her brother's confidence was certain: but even ſhe had never ſpoken quite plainly to Althea, who, from all the obſervations ſhe had made on the mother as well as the daughters, thought ſhe ſaw, that while they

ſhould

ſhould think of Marchmont as moſt fortunate in becoming the huſband of Althea, they conſidered her proſpects, and even her preſent fortune, as placing her entirely out of his reach; for the latter was not enough to put it in her power to give even a competent ſhare of affluence to the man ſhe ſhould prefer, if he had himſelf nothing, as was literally the caſe with Marchmont; and while the ſtyle of life ſhe had been uſed to, and which ſhe preferred, ſeemed to aſſimilate their deſtinies, Mrs. Marchmont could not bear to have it ſuppoſed, that ſhe wiſhed to take advantage of Althea's partiality to *her* family, to engage her in an alliance which that of Sir Audley Dacres might deem ſo unequal on account of the indigence and diſtreſs to which Marchmont and his family were reduced; though in point of family antiquity they had the advantage. Such Althea fancied were the ſentiments of her female friends; and if her ideas were

juſt, ſhe foreſaw that her ſtay might be painful to the diſintereſted delicacy of Mrs. Marchmont; while on the other hand her partial tenderneſs for Marchmont was ſo far from having ſuffered any abatement, that all ſhe had thought, all ſhe had heard of him; every little anecdote expreſſive of his heart and manners in his boyiſh days, which accidentally fell from his ſiſters; of late,

"The dangers he had met;"

and, above all, his manner of ſupporting them—every circumſtance contributed to render indelible the impreſſion ſhe had from their earlieſt acquaintance conceived of his merit: whatever worldly wiſdom, or prudence in its moſt gentle form, could ſay, Althea was on examination of her heart convinced, that all that the world could offer of adulation, all it could afford of thoſe pleaſures which occupy the lives of the rich or noble,

noble, would give to her neither content nor gratification; and that with Marchmont, a retirement in which ſhe thought her fortune might ſuffice for their ſupport, would be in her opinion the only ſcheme of happineſs. How much ſuch a plan coincided with the ſentiments of Marchmont himſelf, his own letters ſufficiently teſtified; for, though he had too much reſpectful reſerve to name her to Everſley, it was eaſy to ſee to whom many expreſſions in his letters alluded.

Many days, and even ſome weeks, paſſed, while Althea, occupied in theſe reflections, and debating what ſhe ought to do, came to no reſolution. Uneaſineſs and doubt again oppreſſed Mrs. Marchmont; it ſeemed certain that if her ſon had, as he intended, directed his courſe towards England, he muſt long before now have arrived there. What then could be the reaſon that they had not now heard of him for more than ten weeks—— Where was he? What could have hap-

pened to him? If his journey had been impeded, could he not have written?—Every day in its progreſs increaſed the painful apprehenſions that theſe reflections brought with them, and with every ſetting ſun that hope grew fainter and fainter, by which alone the languid and ill-confirmed fortitude of Mrs. Marchmont was ſuſtained.

Althea more than participated in the pain this cruel ſuſpenſe inflicted. She now no longer thought of how ſhe ſhould act when Marchmont arrived. Marchmont came not! perhaps might never more appear—While ſhe had been debating how ſhe ſhould receive him and act towards him, he perhaps was already no more—Some ſtrange miſtake, ſome unforeſeen and cruel accident had perhaps deſtroyed him after all his former eſcapes; and nothing might now remain of him but a name, and the fond and bitter remembrance of his virtues and his misfortunes

misfortunes in the breaſts of thoſe who had loved him.

Overwhelmed with theſe tormenting fears, which, though they never gave her a moment's reſpite, ſhe yet commanded herſelf enough not to communicate to friends made miſerable enough by their own, Althea almoſt forgot a circumſtance that would at any other time have given her conſiderable diſquiet. This was, that the time of her receiving her ſmall dividend was paſſed, and it had not been ſent. During the winter ſhe had repeatedly written to Lady Dacres, entreating to have that which aroſe from her mother's fortune and ſettlement of two thouſand pounds: but ſhe had received no anſwer from her Ladyſhip herſelf, and but once any notice, when an attorney, a ſort of deputy to the man ſhe intruſted with her affairs, wrote to Althea to this effect:

Miſs ALTHEA DACRES.

"MADAM,

"This ſerves to let you know, by order of my Lady, that her Ladyſhip hath received yours of the 26th ultimo; and that as to contents thereof, ſhe deſires you will apply to Mr. Serjeant Mohun on the ſame; her Ladyſhip not being thereon able or willing to act alone, as may be known, reference being had to the laſt will and teſtament of Sir Audley Dacres, baronet, deceaſed.

"You will pleaſe, therefore, on the ſubject matter aboveſaid, to apply accordingly to the learned Serjeant as above-mentioned — Not doubting but he will give you due information and ſatisfactory opinion thereon. By order

of

of the Dowager Lady Dacres, I remain, for Anthony Skin'em, Eſq.

"MADAM,

"Your humble Servant,

"JAMES TYGERFACE.

"Holborn-court, Gray's-inn."

As Althea, however ſhe might dread being inconvenienced, could not prevail on her herſelf to make this enquiry, days, and weeks, and months paſſed on. Again the dividend became due from the two thouſand pounds. There was now upwards of a hundred pounds due to her, but her preſent applications were as fruitleſs as the paſt. How ſhe was to continue to live on ſo ſlender a ſtipend as the intereſt of eight hundred pounds, Lady Dacres never deigned to enquire. But though Althea was not now as during her ſhort ſtay at Margate in the way of hearing it, ſhe had reaſon to be-

lieve that Lady Dacres, more than ever deteſting her whom ſhe determined to injure, had been buſy with her fame; and in fact ſhe had contrived, by means of the idle, ſilly, and malignant goſſips with whom ſhe was now much connected, to ſpread injurious reports of Althea, where ſhe was only known by name, and by being the daughter of Sir Audley. In one of theſe circles it was ſaid that her temper was ſo intolerable, that, had ſhe not been inveigled away by the fawning adulation of the neceſſitous Marchmonts, it would have been impoſſible for Lady Dacres long to have endured her.—In another party it was aſſerted, that ſhe was *ſo extravagant that a mine would not ſuffice for her ſupport*; and in a third it was whiſpered, that "a clandeſtine and moſt degrading attachment had put her excellent mother-in-law under the painful neceſſity of conniving at, and indeed of encouraging,

raging, her removal into another family."

There was not one of theſe inſinuations but what gathered ſomething from the malevolence or folly of every one who repeated it; and ſome of them reached Mr. Everſley during his reſidence in London, to the inconceivable delight of his wife, whoſe envy of Althea neither time nor diſtance had weakened. The poor man, whoſe health was literally waſting under the hopeleſs miſery inflicted by this domeſtic plague, never mentioned, ſtill leſs defended Althea, when his wife, on purpoſe to torment him, began the converſation.—But convinced himſelf of her uncommon worth, and her ſpotleſs innocence, while of her perſonal attractions he had long been but too ſenſible, he contented himſelf with ſilently doing her all the ſervice in his power, and felt almoſt the only conſolation of his life in performing acts of friendſhip towards her and

Marchmont.

Marchmont. Utterly without hope himſelf, he tried to reduce his affection for Althea (which had inſenſibly crept on his heart even before the death of Mrs. Trevyllian) into the bounds of friendſhip.—Mingled as it was with ſome degree of pain and regret, it yet afforded him almoſt the only pleaſurable ſenſation his ſick heart was ſenſible of. The idea of her being one day united to Marchmont had ſometimes given him acute uneaſineſs; but when he had reſolution to reaſon about it, he was compelled to acknowledge that no other man could deſerve her—that with no other man was it probable ſhe would be happy; and then, ſenſible that he could have nothing to hope for himſelf, he reſolved with ſincerity to promote by ſuch means as might occur the felicity of his friend.

In the mean time, and during the cruel ſuſpenſe they were in as to what had befallen Marchmont after his laſt

letter,

letter, Everſley, who had a houſe in town for what is called the education of the two fair copies of their mama's perfections, ſtole twice into Kent to viſit, for a few hours, Althea and the family of his friend: and it was from hints that he dropped in theſe converſations that the former gathered what ſhe knew of the malignity with which Lady Dacres defamed and traduced her.

To him, on the ſecond of theſe interviews, Althea communicated her increaſing uneaſineſs at the obſtinate ſilence of Lady Dacres, or the unfeeling reference to Mr. Mohun, which was ſtill more irkſome to her. Everſley adviſed her to conquer her repugnance, and write to Mohun. She could not determine upon it. So great was the diſlike ſhe had originally felt towards this man, that, though ſhe ſuppoſed his tranſient inclination for her had long ſince been at an end; though ſhe now never heard his name mentioned with

her

her own, and indeed hardly at all in the retirement she now lived in; yet her antipathy continued almost in its first force, and she persuaded herself that to write to him would only be to solicit contumely and affront.——Eversley, who knew little of him but from his public character, knew, however, enough to believe the aversion of Althea well-founded; and at the same time to fear, that if he himself applied to such a man on behalf of Althea, it would give fresh food to Lady Dacres's malice, and embroil him anew with his wife, who insisted upon it in private, and often declared in her fits of ill humour, even before company, that he was in love with Althea. These considerations would, notwithstanding, have yielded to his ardent wish of doing her service, but he doubted whether that purpose might not be better answered by the application of a lawyer—and he thought he knew, that rare character, an honest

one;

one; to whom, as he was himſelf little connected with him, he thought he might recommend the buſineſs of Althea, without its being known that he interfered in it.

To this propoſal Althea conſented—not, however, without reluctance, but as the only means that remained untried, to procure for her what undoubtedly belonged to her; and it was agreed that Mr. Bargrave ſhould write to Mr. Mohun for leave to ſee the will of Sir Audley (which Althea had only once heard read in a curſory and confuſed manner); that he ſhould afterwards inſpect the marriage ſettlement of Althea's mother, if it could be had, and then ſee what was the legality of the reſolution Lady Dacres ſeemed to have formed to diſtreſs her, by withholding, at leaſt till ſhe was of age, the ſmall income ariſing from money undoubtedly her own.

Amidſt

Amidſt theſe uneaſy reflections on pecuniary buſineſs, and thoſe ſtill more cruelly painful, that were occaſioned by the uncertainty of Marchmont's fate, time wore heavily away; but ſpring once more returned—joyleſs to Althea, joyleſs to her friends! for it ſerved only to remind them of the long abſence of him to whom they were all ſo paſſionately attached; to convince them that the ſcene and ſeaſon, however lovely, ſerve only to embitter the anguiſh of the unhappy. The months of ſpring have above all others this effect. The eye weakened by tears ſupports with pain that brilliant freſhneſs which conveys to the happy ſenſations of gaiety and pleaſure; and nature in its joyous progreſſion ſeems to inſult the ſick heart in which hope is dead.

Such, however unhappy they were, was not preciſely the caſe with the inhabitants of the Kentiſh cottage.—Mrs. Marchmont, though her ſolicitude and impatience

impatience hourly increaſed, ſtill cheriſhed the hope that her ſon would return in ſafety: yet oppreſſed by fears that he might not, and by a ſort of anxious and even nervous deſpondence, the effect of former ſorrows and diſappointments, ſhe could not bear the leaſt perſonal exertion; and while ſhe encouraged and entreated her daughters and Althea to walk, and to enjoy as much as they could the refreſhing beauty of the advancing year, ſhe often remained alone in her room, trying to acquire fortitude to meet with reſignation and calmneſs whatever of ſorrow might yet be before her: yet often ſhrinking from the painful effort, ſhe involuntarily indulged the natural weakneſs of wiſhing to eſcape from the world, rather than to hear that her greateſt bleſſing had left it.

What had been the ſituation of the object of her fond ſolicitude, may be ſeen by the following account given of himſelf

himſelf by Marchmont to Everſley, who choſe that medium to communicate it to his family.

The comfort that family derived from ſeeing the date, may be more eaſily imagined than deſcribed.

"Dorcheſter, April 10th.

"Once more from Engliſh ground your friend addreſſes you; on that ſoil from whence twelve months ſince he was driven to avoid perpetual impriſonment. It is impoſſible to deſcribe to you, my dear Everſley, the ſenſations I have felt in reviſiting my native country; and particularly this place and county, which I have ſo often paſſed through formerly on my way from London to Eaſtwoodleigh. All the ideas of thoſe days are again preſent to me.—I am at the ſame inn, and ſitting in the ſame room, where I once met Vampyre by appointment; when ſome arrangement of the affairs was propoſed by which

which we hoped to have eſcaped the diſtreſſes that afterwards overtook us. It was, however, certain, that the propoſals were only offered by that execrable wretch to draw us deeper into the ſnares he had laid for us. Even now I ſee the old hideous monſter before me, proſing and attempting to entrap me; and I ſtart up. Indignation and rage ſeize me for a moment, till I recollect the ſcenes I have ſince gone through.—My dying father ſurrounded by the inhuman ſatellites of the law, from whom I could hardly reſcue his poor remains—my mother, pale and ſilent with terror and anguiſh, ſeem again before me. I ſee that countenance to the expreſſion of which it is impoſſible to do juſtice; it is turned on me, and ſeems to forebode all that has ſince happened. My ſiſters are once more weeping round me. I ſee the conſternation of the ſervants: ſome only anxious for their maſter and his family—

others

others ſelfiſhly, yet naturally enough, thinking of themſelves.——

'The Wolf that made this ſpoil'—

once more ſeems preſent; and, like a malignant fiend, enjoying the havock he has made.—I then remember my blaſted proſpects—my ruined hopes.—I feel, ah! too acutely feel, what I might have been, and what I am. Some deprivations, and many mortifications, I have learned to endure, and, I think, with manly fortitude, where they relate wholly to myſelf; but there is one loſs that muſt follow, that ought to follow my loſs of fortune!—Yes, Everſley, I know that I ought to ſubmit too.—Why ſhould I heſitate to avow a paſſion that I ought rather to glory in feeling? It was you, my dear friend, that firſt pointed out to me the beauties of that lovely mind, ſo admirably aſſorted to a perſon that could not be ſeen with indifference

indifference as the faireſt work of heaven; but which, animated as it is with ſuch a ſoul, cannot fail of inſpiring the moſt ardent paſſion. Everſley! I adore this charming woman. I have always adored her from the firſt moment I ſaw her. Does ſhe ſtill bear the ſame name as when I left England? Can ſo much beauty remain unſought in obſcurity? Can ſo much mildneſs have reſiſted parental authority? Ah! no, I cannot, I dare not hope it. Perhaps there is no longer ſuch a perſon exiſting as her of whom I think in her ſingle ſtate; and I return to England only to be convinced that no place on this earth can afford to me the ſhadow of happineſs.

"Everſley, will you pardon my weakneſs? I know it is a weakneſs, though I might with a little parade qualify it by the names of precaution and prudence. But I cannot determine to proceed to London till I know what I am to hear there, and in what ſituation is my family.

mily. I ſhall therefore await your anſwer at the next village, for this place is too public: I ſhall go thither preſently; and if I find there is time before the poſt goes out, I will add to this a detail of all that has befallen me ſince my laſt letter."

"At Hinton, a village on the road near Dorcheſter.

"I find my letter will not go till tomorrow between two and three o'clock: let me, therefore, employ the interval in relating how I ſet forward under the auſpices of my new friend Captain Forreſter, and journeyed in ſafety ſome leagues. I was then ſtopped, notwithſtanding my paſſport, by a general order which prevented any one paſſing the lines—a circumſtance that was leſs painful to me, as I imagined a few days would end it; as Forreſter's name and recommendation procured me kindneſs and accommodation every where, and I learned

learned that his detachment was ſent for, and was to join the troops with whom I was.

"There is ſomething infectious, my friend, in that ſenſation of the human mind which we call a thirſt of glory. I felt it growing upon me, and often aſked myſelf whether there was not ſomething ſhabby and unworthy in my creeping back clandeſtinely to England, when here I might hew out an honourable ſubſiſtence with my ſword, or find an honourable grave.

'Why ſhould a man whoſe heart is warm within
'Sit like his grandſire on a monument?'

And often, very often I determined, though my ſoul ſickened as I nearly ſurveyed the miſeries of war, to enter a volunteer in any regiment that would receive me. Conſideration for my mother, who often had expreſſed her fears that I ſhould take this reſolution, was

the only thing that gave me a moment's hesitation.—I found arguments to prove that even she would consent, and conquer her repugnance, when the matter was no longer in debate, and when she could calmly consider the reasons I had to offer. My mind being so far made up, I had written to my mother and to you, and waited for nothing but Forrester's arrival, whose advice was to determine me as to the regiment I should engage in. He was to join the next day. Instead of which, an account came that his party had been met by a detachment of the enemy of three times their number, and after an obstinate resistance, in which many gallant fellows had fallen, Captain Forrester had been dangerously wounded, and taken prisoner. It is impossible to describe to you the general concern felt for this amiable young man; and mine was as deep and as sincere as those who had long known him. One would have imagined that every man who

who ſpoke of or came to enquire about him, had themſelves loſt a brother or ſome very dear friend. While his fate was uncertain, I could only determine not to leave the place till ſome intelligence was received of him; and fortunately this came ſooner than, from the apprehended ferocity of the enemy, we thought likely. Poor Forreſter lay at a little town in poſſeſſion of the French; his ſervant was miſſing, and the principal danger he was in was for want of attendance. Having fallen into the hands of a man of decent manners, and who was not without thoſe generous feelings that ſoften the horrors of war, he was allowed to write for a ſurgeon, and for ſome perſon to attend him if his old and faithful ſervant could not be found. It was almoſt certain that the poor fellow had been killed when his maſter was taken. To find a ſubſtitute for him at ſuch a time, and at ſuch a place, was not eaſy. I entreated and

obtained leave to go as his friend. I was in no military capacity, and the commanding officer, very anxious for the life of Forreſter, accepted my offer with pleaſure. I found my poor friend in ſuch a ſtate that only the ſkill of his ſurgeon, applied at the moment it was, would have carried him through. He recovered but very ſlowly; and I had the comfort of believing what he warmly acknowledged, that he owed his recovery, indeed he thought his life, to my unwearied attendance on him. At length, after a painful interval of ten weeks, during which time the poor convaleſcent was compelled to move three times as his captors found it convenient, he was adjudged well enough to be ſent to Paris, whither I would have attended him; but this the French would not permit: we were therefore obliged to part. I procured a paſſport for Oſtend, for the Engliſh army were now removed, and, proceeding thither, embarked a fort-

night

night ſince in a ſmall Daniſh veſſel which was on the point of ſailing the night of my arrival. Impatient to reach England, I threw myſelf into it without enquiry, and did not ſuſpect, till we were ſome leagues at ſea in a very tempeſtuous night, ſuch as frequently precedes or follows the equinox, that there were not hands enough on board to navigate the veſſel, and that the few that we had were young in their buſineſs, and totally unacquainted with the Engliſh coaſt, on which they had undertaken to land us.

"This intelligence was communicated to me by a paſſenger who ſeemed to ſet a higher value on his life than I did on mine, and who was ſo very reſtleſs and uneaſy (and to ſay the truth, the ſtorm did furiouſly increaſe), that I was at length induced to go upon deck; and from the little I knew of the matter I did not think the apprehenſions of my fellow-traveller very ill grounded. The

wind blew violently from the north-eaſt; and inſtead of our making Dover or Deal, which indeed ſoon became almoſt impoſſible, I thought we were quite as likely to be driven on ſhore on the back of the Iſle of Wight, or even farther weſtward. The night was totally dark, and what was at firſt a heavy gale became ſoon a hurricane. Of our three men and a boy, one of the former got drunk and went to ſleep with the utmoſt compoſure; and I know not by what miracle it was, that inſtead of driving againſt the rocks of the Iſle of Wight we kept down Channel, ſo that when day broke we were near Portland. What it was our ſailors knew not; but I was well acquainted with the coaſt, having often ſailed along it from the weſt. I deſired immediately to be put on ſhore. I had paid my Dane at Oſtend, and my baggage conſiſted only of a ſmall portmanteau. It was indifferent to theſe men what became of me, and I was glad

to

to have no farther to go with ſuch unſkilful conductors. The other paſſenger, notwithſtanding his fears, preferred following his firſt deſtination; and the veſſel not having received much damage, with a favourable wind (for it had changed at ſun-riſe to the weſt) they returned up Channel; while I, with my portmanteau under my arm, deſired and found a temporary ſhelter in one of the two little inns, which any where elſe would be called alehouſes, on this barren and dreary ſpot.

"I was exceſſively fatigued, and found ſome inconvenience from a bruiſe I had received by having been thrown violently down when the veſſel had ſuddenly pitched during the night. I therefore went to bed, and, after having ſlept ſome hours, awoke with an odd ſenſation of wonder, as I ſaid, 'Well! I am once more then on Engliſh ground!—I am, where a few hours would convey me to London.—Ha! and what ſhall I learn

there? When I go to the bookſeller who uſually receives my letters for me, and with whom I deſired my family to leave the direction where they might be found—how ſhall I tremble to aſk if they are all well! And even this enquiry I muſt make by ſtealth—and I go to hide myſelf in ſome obſcure corner of the town, and again have recourſe to the precarious occupation of an author—for, alas! what other means have I of exiſtence? What! muſt I then ſubmit to all the miſerable expedients I have already been compelled to practiſe? And to eſcape from the fangs of that wretch Vampyre muſt I undergo all the inconveniences that a felon is ſubject to?'

"Ah! my dear friend, as former ſcenes aroſe to my mind, I almoſt wiſhed that I had in France met the fate that menaced me; or that the ſtorm of the preceding day had ended my troubles. Accuſe me not of weakneſs, or unmanly repining, Everſley; but think of the

courſe

courſe of my life, and own that I have not hitherto ill endured my very ſevere deſtiny. Thouſands you have ſometimes told me are *as* unfortunate, and tens of thouſands *more* unfortunate than I am. I am afraid the eſtimate, ſad as it is, is ſhort of the truth; but not one ray of comfort do I derive from ſo melancholy a reflection.

'I feel by proof,
'That fellowſhip in pain divides not ſmart,
'Nor lightens aught each man's particular load.'

"In this diſpoſition of mind I walked out. It was a dull and gloomy evening. The ſun had diſappeared beneath volumes of heavy clouds in the ſouth-weſt, and this naturally cheerleſs and forlorn ſpot of earth, or rather of ſtone, never appeared more deſolate. It ſeemed to ſuit my fortune as well as my diſpoſition. A group of half-naked children followed me, offering to ſell ſhells and pieces of ſhining ſtone, the

produce of their miſerable iſland. I gave them all the ſmall money I had, to engage them to leave me to my ſad meditations: but a boy, and then a young woman, purſued me—one with ſome canes, another with a piece of linen, which they ſaid had been picked up on the ſands, the remains of a wreck that had been driven on ſhore about a fortnight before. I aſſured them that I had no occaſion for ſuch articles, and, made peeviſh by their importunity, while I could conſider them as little otherwiſe than plunderers who lived on the ſpoils of the dead, I went on to that ſpot of remarkable wildneſs and horror, where the pile of ruin called Bow-and-Arrow, and ſometimes known by the name of Rufus's Caſtle, hangs on a crag of ſtone over the remains of the ancient church, of which ſome conſiderable detached parts are now ſtanding: many broken tombs are ſtill ſeen in the rough area that was once the church-yard.—I ſat down on one of them;

them; and as I looked around me and ſaw another equinoctial ſtorm gathering in the ſouth-weſt, and blunting by accumulated clouds the rays of the ſun as it ſunk beyond them, tingeing them with a dull purpliſh red, I thought I had never been in a place ſo adapted to the reſidence of deſolation and deſpair.

"You will perhaps think it ſtrange that at ſuch a time, with a body fatigued and a mind ill at eaſe, I ſhould write or indeed think of poetry; but the faculty of compoſing it, though never I think to be commanded, ſometimes ſerves to mitigate by amuſing the hours of pain, of languor, and uneaſineſs: not however when anxiety is very acute. But I was now in a ſtate of uncertainty as to thoſe I moſt loved, which I knew a few hours might terminate at my own choice, and was juſt enough preſent to the ſcene I was in, which was indeed perfectly in uniſon with my feelings, to deſcribe it.

"It would be a waſte of time to apologiſe farther for ſuch a trifle, and I

know you are rather a partial than a ſevere critic.

DESCRIPTIVE ODE,

Written among the Ruins of the Old Church, on the Weſt Side of Portland; above which are Ruins called Bow-and-Arrow, or Rufus's Caſtle.

CHAOTIC pile, of barren ſtone,
That nature's hurrying hand has thrown,
Half-finiſh'd, from the troubled waves;
On whoſe rude brow the riſted tow'r
Has ſcowl'd through many a ſtormy hour
On this drear ſite of tempeſt-beaten graves!

Sure, Deſolation loves to ſhroud
His hideous form within the cloud
That hovers round thy rugged head;
And, as through broken vaults beneath
The future ſtorms low-muttering breathe,
He ſeems to hear the murmurs of the dead.

Here marks the Fiend, with eager eyes,
Far out at ſea the fogs ariſe
That dimly hide the beacon'd ſtrand;

Hence

Hence liſtens the portentous roar
Of ſullen waves, as on the ſhore
Monotonous they burſt, and tell the ſtorm at hand.

Northward the Demon's eyes are caſt,
O'er yonder bare and ſterile waſte,
Where, born to hew and heave the block,
Man, loſt in ignorance and toil,
Becomes aſſociate to the ſoil,
And his heart hardens like his native rock.

On the bleak hills, with ſliat o'erſpread,
No bloſſoms rear the purple head,
No ſhrub perfumes the Zephyr's breath;
But o'er the cold and cheerleſs down
Grim Deſolation ſeems to frown,
And blaſt the ungrateful ſoil with partial death.

Here the ſcath'd trees, with leaves half-dreſt,
Shade no ſoft ſongſter's ſecret neſt,
Whoſe Spring-notes ſoothe the penſive ear;
But high the croaking Cormorant flies,
And Mews, and Awks with clamorous cries,
Tire the lone echoes of theſe caverns drear.

Forlorn, among theſe ruins gray,
Some widow'd Mourner loves to ſtray,
Marking the melancholy main;
Where once afar ſhe could diſcern
Through the blue waves *his* ſails return,
Who never, never now, returns again!

Long

Long on theſe tombs, by ſtorms uptorn,
The hopeleſs wreteh will lingering mourn,
Till, from the Ocean riſing red,
The miſty Moon, with lurid ray,
Lights her reluctant on her way,
To ſteep in tears her ſolitary bed.

Here the dire Spirit oft ſurveys
The ſhip, that to the weſtern bays,
With favouring gales, purſues its courſe;
Then calls the vapour dark that blinds
The pilot;—calls the felon winds,
That heave the billows with reſiſtleſs force.

Commixing with the blotted ſkies,
High and more high the wild waves riſe;
Till, as impetuous torrents urge,
Driven on yon fatal bank accurſt,
The veſſel's maſſy timbers burſt,
And the crew ſinks beneath the infuriate ſurge.

There find the weak an early grave,
While youthful ſtrength the whelming wave
Repels; and, labouring for the land,
With ſhorten'd breath and upturn'd eyes,
Sees the rough ſhore above him riſe,
Nor dreams that rapine meets him on the ſtrand.

And are there then, in human form,
Monſters more ſavage than the ſtorm,
Who from the gaſping ſufferer tear

The

The dripping weed?—who dare to reap
The inhuman harveſt of the deep
From half-drown'd victims whom the tempeſts ſpare?

Ah! yes!—By avarice once poſſeſt,
No pity moves the ruſtic's breaſt:
Callous he proves—as thoſe who haply wait,
Till I (a pilgrim weary worn)
To my own native land return,
With legal toils to drag me to my fate!

"You ſee, my dear Everſley, how naturally the ideas of the poet return *to his own buſineſs and boſom.* I ſhall wait to hear from you before I proceed. You, I know, will not deſpiſe me, while I acknowledge myſelf to be, in all that relates to my family, and to one other perſon, a coward.

"Farewel, my dear friend—I direct this, as my former ones, to your friend in London. If it ſhould travel after you

you into Devonſhire, how many days longer muſt I endure this miſerable ſuſpenſe?

"E. A. M."

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Se poi ritorno
Preſſo al mio bene
Torna la ſpeme
Fugge il timor.

AFTER this letter, which Everſley had thus ſent to Mrs. Marchmont without any reſerve or alteration, it could be no longer doubted that her ſon's paſſion for Althea was perfectly underſtood. Althea and Lucy had read the letter together. For awhile, anxiety for the viciſſitudes he had paſſed through, and joy that he was in preſent ſafety, ſuſpended every other ſentiment; but the moment Althea was left to her reflections

flections all thoſe paſſages in which ſhe was ſo unreſervedly ſpoken of returned to her recollection, and overwhelmed her with confuſion. She now dreaded to meet the eyes of Mrs. Marchmont, mild and dejected as they were; and more than ever it became neceſſary to determine what ſhe was to do, ſince Marchmont only waited Everſley's anſwer, which was already gone to him, to come to his mother and his family. In this uneaſy ſituation Althea ſhut herſelf for an hour in her own room to debate the matter with herſelf; and ſhe had never yet been in a predicament where it was ſo difficult to decide.

Had ſhe been poſſeſſed of her ſmall fortune, and could have been ſure that Mrs. Marchmont would have deſired as earneſtly as ſhe knew her daughters did, that ſhe ſhould give her hand to Marchmont, ſhe found that what is termed worldly prudence would have had no power to prevent her giving herſelf

ſelf to the only man for whom ſhe had ever felt the ſlighteſt degree of intereſt. Some men of fortune ſhe would not, though they were to offer themſelves, accept: many others would not ſeek her.—Were ſuch men as Mohun, as Wardour, as the elegant Captain Melincourt deſcribed by Marchmont, and fifty others that ſhe had ſeen—were *theſe* perſons with whom the moſt ſplendid pecuniary poſſeſſions would induce her to live?—Certainly not. With any one of theſe, or any that reſembled them, ſhe was certain ſhe muſt be miſerable; with Marchmont, in deſpite of any pecuniary inconveniences, and in any rank of life, as ſure that ſhe muſt be happy.

It would be yet above twelve months before ſhe became of age; and it ſeemed but too evident that Lady Dacres, influenced either by malice, avarice, or both, was determined to keep poſſeſſion of her little fortune, both intereſt and principal,

principal, till then. But thinking ſteadily on what her aunt uſed to ſay, when anxiety for her future fate had occaſionally turned the converſation on matters relative to her fortune, ſhe thought ſhe had a clear recollection of having heard that this ſmall portion was by her mother's marriage articles ſo ſettled, that it was to be paid either on her attaining her majority, *or* day of marriage. If this were ſo, ſhe had it as ſhe hoped in her power immediately to give it to Marchmont on becoming his wife.

But from the lawyer employed by Mr. Everſley ſhe had yet no anſwer, and anxiety and doubt were ſtill to cloud the mind of Althea; anxiety and doubt that never were more painfully felt than at the moment ſhe was firſt to meet Mrs. Marchmont. They neither of them ſpoke: the ſiſters were equally ſilent; but when Althea ſtole a glance at Mrs. Marchmont, ſhe thought there was affection towards her, mingled with the

tenderneſs

tenderneſs and complacency that the certainty of her ſon's return had thrown into her countenance.—As ſoon as the dinner was removed, the three girls, as if they had been directed to do ſo, went out of the room. Althea underſtood that the moment was arrived when their mother would ſpeak to her in regard to him who was neareſt both their hearts; and though hers beat ſo much that ſhe could hardly breathe, ſhe determined not to evade a converſation which ſhe at once wiſhed for and dreaded.

Mrs. Marchmont, with more reſolution, though not with leſs trembling earneſtneſs than was ſhewn by Althea herſelf, entered immediately on the little hiſtory of her ſentiments ſince her ſon's attachment to Althea had been ſuſpected or known; and Althea was convinced that only motives of the moſt diſintereſted delicacy had prevented the mother's delighted acquieſcence and encouragement.—"Where, my dear Miſs Dacres,"

Dacres," ſaid ſhe, "where could the moſt ambitious look for birth, for accompliſhments, temper and perſon, ſuperior to yours? Believe me, I felt all their value; and was ſure that there was not a woman on earth ſo capable of making Marchmont amends for all the misfortunes of his untoward deſtiny.—But when I thought of the right all theſe gave you to fill the moſt elevated rank in ſociety; when I conſidered the very humble condition to which *we* are reduced, and imagined how much malice would have to ſay if we ſeduced you from happier fortune to ſhare, and, as the world would aſſert, to mitigate our indigence; I could not bear to be acceſſary to what, while it drew on us the cruelеſt reflections, might hereafter be to you a ſource of regret and repentance."

"I am very ſure, Madam," ſaid Althea in a tremulous voice, "that I ſhall never repent of ſharing any condition of

of life with your family."—Then recovering a little more courage, ſhe added—"I will be above diſguiſe, my dear Mrs. Marchmont, on a ſubject ſo intereſting to us both; I will own to you that, almoſt from my firſt acquaintance with your ſon, he appeared to me a young man of great merit, and nothing ever hurt me more than my father's coldneſs and diſlike towards him, for which I never could account.—When a ſtrange chance drove me to Eaſtwoodleigh, I heard many anecdotes that confirmed me in my good opinion of him. You know," added ſhe, bluſhing, "that we met, while the cruel perſecution he underwent confined him within the deſerted walls of his paternal houſe: then the partiality I had at an early period entertained for him was confirmed; and, from the moment I avowed that he was not indifferent to me, I have thought of nothing but regulating my mind and my wiſhes to that

ſituation

ſituation of life which I determined to ſhare with him, whenever it ſhould be in my power to fulfil the engagement I had made; a tacit engagement indeed, ſince he was too generous to ſolicit my promiſe—but, nevertheleſs, an engagement which worlds would not tempt me to recede from."

It is unneceſſary to relate Mrs. Marchmont's anſwer to this generous declaration.—From this moment the mother awaited, with redoubled delight, the hourly-expected arrival of her ſon; while Althea yielded, for the firſt time, to her extreme affection for him, unchecked by any of thoſe fears with which it had, till then, been chaſtiſed. Some apprehenſions yet hung over the whole party, which however ſeemed lighter, ſince they were now, without ſcruple, diſcuſſed. It was ſo long ſince Vampyre had been baffled in his purſuit, that the ſanguine ſpirits of Lucy perſiſted in believing it impoſſible he ſhould think

think of renewing it; while Mrs. Marchmont, who had a deeper horror of his inveterate infamy, and Amelia, who had a more trembling dread of him from all she so well remembered of her father's sufferings, hardly dared encourage the confidence of his safety which Althea and Lucy were delighted to cherish—the former indeed, less from the hope that the rancorous villain might abate his malice, than from a secret resolution she made to sacrifice all the fortune that was in her own power to purchase the safety of Marchmont. While these hopes, fears, and projects took their turn with his female friends and family, the ever-generous and faithful Eversley was better contriving for his immediate safety. Far from being lulled into security by the length of his absence, or the apparent tranquillity of his enemies, he was sure that malice and avarice keep no holidays; and he knew that Vampyre, like a blood-hound, would instantly re-

gain the ſcent, and purſue his unhappy victim even to death, if he had once the ſlighteſt intimation of his being in England.—Inſtantly, therefore, on receiving Marchmont's firſt letter, he wrote to him by the earlieſt ſtage, aſſuring him of the health of his family, acquainting him with Althea's reſidence among them, and entreating him to quit the weſtern road, for him ſo full of danger, and without entering London, where he might the next moment meet one of Vampyre's emiſſaries, to make the beſt of his way through Hampſhire and Surry, to the neighbourhood of Sittingbourne.

Marchmont, who waited for information from Everſley before he left the little inn from whence his laſt letter was dated, no ſooner received this welcome news, than all the gloom that had ſo lately hung over his mind was diſſipated; his tranſient miſanthropy was forgot, with the uneaſineſs that had taught it him; and

and hope ſeemed, with redoubled ſplendour, to enlighten his path to happineſs. Althea finding a home with his mother—Althea added to the dear group that now ſo anxiouſly expected him! was an image ſo delicious, that he could hardly believe it real. A thouſand times he read over that part of Everſley's letter; and ſo eager was he to realize the lovely viſion it preſented to his eyes, that he would hardly have had prudence to attend implicitly to the advice given in the ſubſequent part of it, if he had not found, on enquiry, and by conſulting an old ſmoky map that hung over the chimney of the alehouſe parlour, that he could make his way rather ſooner with hired horſes into Kent, by croſs roads, than if he had gone round by London.—Horſes, therefore, he immediately procured; for, beſides what he had left from the money paid him at Oſtend which Forreſter had given him an order for, Everſley had ſent him a

bank note. Expence, therefore, being leſs an object to him at this moment, he took poſt-horſes from town to town, which he thought were leſs liable to delays than poſt-chaiſes, as he could go his own pace.

Very different, as he travelled among the trees of the New Foreſt, now juſt putting forth the tender ſhade of the future ſummer, were the ſenſations of Marchmont from thoſe he had long felt. Every wood ſcent that floated in the air, every tree, whoſe earlier foliage half-expanded above his head, were, for him, pregnant with delight. He ſtopped, as evening approached, at another humble cabin, that hung out its ruſtic ſign on the ſkirts of the foreſt, to reſt himſelf and the horſes, before he went on to Wincheſter—a plan in which he was ſure to have the thorough concurrence of the poſtillion, who accompanied him to lead them back; and, leaving him to take care of them and of himſelf

himſelf for an hour, Marchmont wandered into the wood.

Within its wild receſſes a thouſand birds were ſinging their evening hymns to the ſun, as his laſt rays tinged the boles and branches with roſy gold.—Gradually all became ſilent; but, after a moment's pauſe, the nightingale rather practiſed than performed her ſuperior ſerenade, juſt trying her long-ſuſpended powers, and then becoming mute for a moment, as if to recollect every link of harmony. This recalled to the memory of Marchmont his reflections and ſenſations of the preceding year, when, in making his way to Paris, he had often lingered among the woods, and particularly at Fontainebleau:—then, from the ſtate of his mind, the ſame ſounds that now ſoothed him, ſerved only to increaſe his depreſſion.

The beautiful ſonnet of Petrarch he had then repeated, with particular emphaſis on the two lines—

E tuttè notte par che m'accompagne
E mi rammente la mia dura ſorte.

Then too he had read, with feelings too exactly coinciding, from Jean Baptiſte Rouſſeau, this apoſtrophe to a nightingale—

Hélas! que mes triſtes penſées
M'offrent des maux bien plus cuiſans!
Vous pleurez des peines paſſées,
Je pleure mes ennuis préſens:
Et quand la nature attentive
Cherche à calmer vos deplaiſirs,
Il faut même que je me prive
De la douceur de mes ſoupirs!

But now it ſeemed as if the face of nature had felt as new and rapid a change, within the few days ſince Marchmont had left the Iſle of Portland, as he himſelf had experienced ſince he had received Everſley's letter; for in believing, as he now did, that Althea would ſoon be all his own, he ſeemed to poſſeſs a renovated exiſtence.—While he

he yielded to hopes ſo enchanting, thoſe ſymptoms of the renovation of nature which he ſaw about him ſoothed his imagination; and the ſoliloquy he uttered took almoſt inſenſibly the form of verſe, which he wrote down, meaning, if the lines were worth it, to poliſh them at ſome future time when he ſhould be with Althea, to whoſe fondneſs for flowers they had particular reference.

LINES,

Written in the New Foreſt in early Spring.

AS in the woods, where leathery lichen weaves
Its wintry web, among the ſallow leaves,
Which (through cold months in whirling eddies blown)
Decay beneath the branches once their own,
From the brown ſhelter of their foliage ſear,
Spring the young blooms that lead the floral year:—
When, wak'd by vernal ſuns, the Pilewort* dares
Expand her ſpotted leaves, and ſhining ſtars,

* Pilewort—The Ranunculus Ficaria.

And (veins empurpling all her taſſels pale)
Bends the ſoft Wind-flower* in the tepid gale,
Uncultured bells of azure Jacynths† blow,
And the breeze-ſcenting Violet‡ lurks below:—
So views the wanderer, with delighted eyes,
Reviving hopes from blank deſpondence riſe,
When, blighted by Adverſity's chill breath,
Thoſe hopes had felt a temporary death;
Then with gay heart he looks to future hours,
When Love ſhall dreſs for him the ſummer bowers!
And, as delicious dreams enchant his mind,
Forgets his ſorrows paſt, and gives them to the wind.

Marchmont now croſſed the heaths of Surry; and as from a height he caught a very diſtant view of St. Paul's, and ſaw the atmoſphere darkly tinctured by the volume of ſmoke that continually hovers over London, the charming

* Wind-flower—The Wood Anemony—Anemone nemoroſa.

† Jacynthe, Fr. Hyacinth. non ſcriptus. V. Hare-Bell.

‡ Violet—Viola Odorata.

viſions

viſions with which he was indulging his fancy were for a moment checked, and two lines of Dr. Johnſon occurred to him:—

> The ambuſh there relentleſs villains lay;
> And there the fell Attorney prowls for prey!

But all unpleaſant retroſpect was forgotten, when, looking eaſtward, he figured to himſelf Althea, his adored Althea, adding her tender congratulations to thoſe of his family, and all ready to receive the returned wanderer with delight!

CHAP. VII.

L'homme eſt vraiment déplorable,
Qui, de la *fortune* amoureux,
Se rend lui-même miſérable
En travaillant pour être heureux.

DESCRIPTION, however laboured, would fail to convey an idea of the meeting of Marchmont with his family. Althea declined being preſent when he arrived; and never yet had ſhe ſo much occaſion to collect that mild fortitude which her early inſtructreſs (alarmed for her happineſs when ſhe ſaw her trembling ſenſibility) had laboured to make part of her character. Between the time when his ſafety and arrival in England

England were known and the preſent moment, the thoughts of Althea had been wholly occupied by the idea of ſeeing him as an accepted lover; for that he was ſuch could not fail to be underſtood, nor did ſhe mean affectedly or prudiſhly to diſavow what her heart dictated. Had ſhe been miſtreſs of millions, it was to Marchmont ſhe would have given them. Poſſeſſing hardly a gentlewoman's ſupport, and even part of that likely to be diſputed or withheld, it was with him ſhe determined to ſhare it; and if this reſolution was taken while he was abſent, his preſence, his ardent affection for her, were certain to confirm it.

On his part, violent as had been the paſſion he had conceived for Althea, even from their firſt meeting, and long before it could be encouraged by a ray of hope, it was now ſo heightened by eſteem, by gratitude, and by that tender admiration which ſuch a mind lodged

in so lovely a form could not fail to excite, that, when to all this her generous partiality to him was added, it was perhaps impossible that an attachment more ardent, or more tender, could inhabit a human heart.

Eversley, always fearful of the machinations of the fiend Vampyre, whose persecution he thought as inveterate and as much to be dreaded as the pursuit of the secret tribunal in the fifteenth century, had earnestly entreated Marchmont not to expose himself to a renewal of all the mischief this *legal* monster was capable of doing him, by appearing publicly, or exposing himself carelessly to the attempts that might still be made by a wretch, who, to the basest and most sordid cupidity of the lowest of his profession, added the desire of personal vengeance for the expence he had been put to, or rather which he had put his clients to, in a fruitless pursuit, as well as for the buffets he had received. Eversley, therefore,

fore, in his letters to Marchmont, had earneſtly enforced the neceſſity of prudence and concealment, till ſomething could be done with the clients of Vampyre to whom he propoſed to apply, flattering himſelf that theſe two men were already weary of continuing a perſecution that promiſed ſo little advantage, at ſuch an expence as he knew Vampyre had put them to already: for Everſley had heard from an acquaintance of one of them, that he complained of having already paid Vampyre three hundred pounds for what he had done againſt Marchmont, whoſe debt to him was originally but nine hundred. The other creditor was not leſs diſcontented; but as they were both of that deſcription of men who love money better than reputation, and had not the leaſt idea of honour or honeſty, they had found Vampyre, who heſitated not at perjury, where he could venture it, or even forgery in the ſame caſe, a very uſeful

though

though diabolical inſtrument in the contrivances which uſurers are often obliged to concert with attorneys; and as a great deal of iniquity had gone on among them, they felt themſelves ſo entangled with the infamous inſtrument of their peculation, that, even when they ſaw him purſue a courſe which could do good to nobody but himſelf, they were afraid of ſtopping his villanous career.

Everſley, however, flattering himſelf that they muſt at length be tired, and that they would be glad to accept a compoſition which he propoſed to offer, eſpecially if they believed Marchmont was ſtill out of their reach, again and again exhorted him to remain concealed. The ſervants who now lived with his mother did not know him; in the country where ſhe now reſided he was totally a ſtranger. "Surely therefore," ſaid Everſley in his letter to him, "ſurely it is adviſable, my dear friend, to keep yourſelf as much as poſſible concealed; you

you know the devil, they ſay, never ſleeps." To this exhortation Marchmont anſwered, with more ſpirit than prudence, in the words of Hotſpur:—

'Oh! but I'll ſhame the devil;
'Speak truth, and ſhame the devil!'

Then continuing more calmly, he added, "If in the ſhort retroſpect of my life, my dear Everſley, there is any recollection that brings with it unpleaſurable ſenſations, it is when I think over the ſtratagems I was, or fancied I was, compelled to uſe, when I was trying to eſcape from the toils of that poiſonous reptile. I feel myſelf degraded whenever I repreſent myſelf as fearing ſo contemptible, ſo baſe a miſcreant, and can feel nothing now but indignation and ſhame that I ever ſubmitted to them—

'Let pale-faced fear keep with the mean-born man.'

"I cannot

"I cannot endure that it ſhould for the future control one of my actions. Beſides, my dear Everſley, conſider how little theſe precautions, if I could conſent to take them, would avail me. You ſay I am not known to my mother's ſervants.—But for whom can I paſs? Is it, do you really think, poſſible for me to return to, or to be received by, my family under a borrowed name, in a fictitious character? And were it poſſible, could I in a circumſtance ſo evidently humiliating pretend to the favour of Miſs Dacres? She would ſurely deſpiſe me; or if her ſweetneſs, her tenderneſs of diſpoſition pleaded for me, ſtill I ſhould deſpiſe myſelf, and feel a man who ſtoops to act like an impoſtor, unworthy of her good opinion. No; I will take no falſe name—I will uſe no means of concealment; but I will certainly not throw myſelf in the way of Vampyre or his employers, and I think it poſſible, that, retired as we ſhall live in

Kent,

Kent, which is a great way from the haunts of this peſt of ſociety, I may remain unnoticed."

Everſley was well aſſured that this hope was ill-founded. However, as he thought himſelf acquitted towards his friend in having offered his opinion, he urged the matter no farther; but conſidered by what means his application to the two inexorable creditors could be made with the greateſt proſpect of ſucceſs.

In the inſtant, however, of his ſetting about this friendly office, and only two days after the arrival of Marchmont at the houſe of his mother, Mrs. Everſley, as if ſhe had known how earneſtly her huſband wiſhed to ſee his friend, took it into her head to follow the advice the phyſicians had long given her in vain, and to go into Devonſhire. This wretched woman, whoſe temper alone would have worn out the ſtrongeſt frame, had inherited a diſeaſed frame from her parents,

parents, which was one among the many objections Everſley had againſt marrying her, though it was over-ruled by his father's earneſt importunities. And indeed the perſonal infirmities this had brought upon her, rendered her to the generous mind of Everſley an object of pity, and made him often endure with more patience her inſufferable ill-humour and ſtrange fits of caprice, which had the appearance of ſtarts of inſanity. Within the laſt two or three years theſe had been more frequent, and it was at laſt evident that they were brought on and aggravated by drinking. This vice inflaming her blood, occaſioned her conſtitutional complaints to recur with redoubled violence; and ſhe now thought herſelf, as the phyſicians had long thought her, in danger. Relinquiſhing, therefore, the plan ſhe had hitherto inſiſted upon of paſſing the ſpring months in London (a plan for which no reaſon could poſſibly be given,

unleſs

unleſs it was that ſhe knew her huſband preferred being in the country), ſhe now haſtened to their home; and Everſley, who particularly wiſhed to conceal the return of Marchmont from her, was compelled to attend her, flattering himſelf that, on pretence of finiſhing ſome buſineſs which he really had in London, he ſhould be able to return within a month. In this, however, he was miſtaken. The lady ſuddenly took it into her head that their houſe was expoſed to the north winds; that it was cold and damp; and having heard in London of ſome ſick perſon that had recovered by going to Penzance—thither ſhe reſolved to go. Her unhappy huſband accompanied her, and was thus at a very great diſtance from Marchmont; without any conſolation for ſuch a diſappointment, unleſs it was that he endeavoured very ſincerely to rejoice at his friend's proſpect of happineſs, while he ſometimes felt that it was well for his continuance in this

this frame of mind, that he had not too frequent opportunities of comparing nearly the good fortune of Marchmont, as the huſband of Althea, with his own intolerable deſtiny.

In the mean time Marchmont availed himſelf, at the earneſt inſtance of Althea, of the ſteps Mr. Everſley's friend had taken to aſcertain her right to her fortune. As this Mr. Bargrave ſeemed intelligent, and had a very good character, Marchmont made no ſcruple to entruſt him with the reaſon of his enquiry: but after numberleſs applications, which were always evaded, Mr. Bargrave had recourſe to Doctors' Commons, where he found that the portion of Althea was, beſides the ſavings of her aunt, a thouſand pounds, payable on the day of her majority or marriage, the diſpoſition of which he had no power to change by will; and one thouſand more ſettled upon her, which, had he lived, he might have retained, but which

it

it did not appear that he had any right to alienate, as he ſeemed to have intended, by leaving a ſort of right to Lady Dacres to pay or to withhold it, as Althea might or might not conſult or pleaſe her in her choice of a huſband. This information Mr. Bargrave gathered, as well from the marriage articles of Althea's mother, as from the will of her father. Neither of them were remarkable for clearneſs and preciſion; and the will ſeemed to be that of a man who, wiſhing to do right, was yet impelled to act contrary to his feelings and his conſcience, and failed in his attempt to reconcile claſhing intereſts. Mr. Bargrave having obtained copies of theſe papers, laid them before a Counſellor of eminence, who declared that the moment Althea was married ſhe would become poſſeſſed of all her fortune, in deſpite of the clauſe in her father's will, or any thing that could be pleaded on any pretence to the contrary.

This

This then, with what ſhe already poſſeſſed, would produce an income of about a hundred-and-forty pounds a year.—Mrs. Marchmont had almoſt a hundred; and on this ſum Althea thought they could live all together in ſome cheap part of England, which, at a great diſtance from the metropolis, it might yet be poſſible to find.

Marchmont ſometimes ſeemed, amidſt their moſt intereſting converſations, to ſhrink from the idea of taking advantage of her affection for him, to engage her to ſhare his indigence; and while his love every day increaſed, he often appeared to be ſtruggling with his wiſhes, and to attempt rather to remain wretched himſelf, than to riſk reducing Althea below her rank in life. Althea was conſcious of all this; but while it increaſed her eſteem, it alſo piqued her generoſity. The matter therefore, as to the poſſeſſion of her fortune on her marriage, being, as they believed,

out

out of doubt, it remained only to be conſidered on the part of Marchmont whether he could be happy on ſo limited an income, and whether, reſigning every project which his birth and his talents might qualify him to ſucceed in, he could prefer a remote retirement, and a very ſmall income, which Althea, now well verſed in all the hiſtory of his former life, thought his knowledge in farming might greatly help to increaſe?

Now it happened, as was indeed very likely, that this very ſame project had taken poſſeſſion of the mind of Marchmont himſelf; but his mind as often recoiled, from the idea of owing every thing to Althea, and of being unable to offer any thing to her, on whom he would have laviſhed worlds:—when, however, two people are agreed in a general ſentiment, it is not long before that agreement becomes known to each other.—Althea, having once made up her mind that this plan of life would make her

happy,

happy, had no hesitation in proposing it, though not immediately to Marchmont, to Lucy. Of course, it easily found its way to the person most interested; and, in the next conversation they had together, Althea found means to silence the delicate scruples of Marchmont, who, no longer attempting at the stoic virtue of refusing the supreme happiness in his power, thought only of hastening it. When, however, they talked every circumstance over, it became his task to obviate objections, for Althea now thought it would be highly indecorous not to inform Lady Dacres of her intentions; whereas Marchmont, who knew perfectly well her Ladyship's aversion to him, and her reasons for it, dreaded lest she should find some means to prevent it. He was sure that her consent was not to be obtained; and had no doubt but Althea's acting against it, if she affected to ask it, would irritate her, and set her upon trying not only to enforce, but to go

beyond

beyond the power given her by the will of her huſband. Beſides all this, Marchmont knew that Vampyre, who had been one of the agents of Sir Ralph Gunſton, was ſtill occaſionally employed by the heireſs of his property; and there was ſome ſtrange juggle about the mortgage given by the elder Marchmont to Sir Ralph, in which Vampyre had a principal concern. Indeed it had always been ſuſpected by Everſley, that the iniquity of that tranſaction, and the fear, if Marchmont had money or ſucceſs in the world, that it might be enquired into, were very ſtrong motives for the malignity of all the parties againſt him, and for their perſeverance in haraſſing and diſtreſſing him, to keep him down. Of all other people then, except Vampyre himſelf, Lady Dacres was the laſt to whom he wiſhed to have Althea's intentions in his favour communicated:—"And, after all," ſaid he, as they diſcourſed upon this, "what do

you owe this woman? a creature who not only attempted to eſtrange from you your father's affections, but dared to propoſe ſacrificing you for life, merely becauſe ſhe could not bear the ſight of ſupreme excellence and lovelineſs!—Not content with ſo baſe an attempt, you ſee that ſhe has endeavoured to uſurp a power over you, by inducing your father to make a will contrary to the ſenſe of a former and irrevocable deed: yet how backward ſhe continued to give you any protection which that power ought to have implied, her conduct towards you, for the three or four months you remained in her houſe, ſurely is a ſufficient ſpecimen. Can my Althea, who generally ſees objects with judgment ſo true, can ſhe really be ſo influenced by prejudice as to believe ſhe ought to compliment away even one hour of her repoſe, to keep up forms of deference and affection where they do not exiſt?"

"It

"It is leſs," anſwered Althea, "to appear to retain deference towards her, than not to violate the rules that the world has preſcribed on theſe occaſions, and the reſpect which ſeems annexed to one who bears my father's name, and to whoſe family I am ſo nearly related."

"And yet," reſumed Marchmont, "Lady Dacres has herſelf been the example of paying very little reſpect to the memory of your father; for ſhe afforded you neither friendſhip nor protection, but ſuffered her malignant envy to counteract every feeling that ſhe ought to have had towards the daughter of her huſband. As to the world, let me, moſt beloved Althea, aſk you what it is you underſtand by the term?—There is, I truſt, nobody who is leſs diſpoſed than I am to argue againſt that reſpect for general opinion, which is a very proper and ſalutary feeling in a certain degree, and is not unfrequently the guardian of virtue and honour when

other defences might perhaps fail; but, believe me, the world, in this caſe, are quite as likely to take your part as that of Lady Dacres, who, certainly, is not generally beloved. Let us, however, inveſtigate what we mean when we talk of the world. I ſuppoſe what is generally underſtood by it, is the great maſs of ſociety, or, to uſe a formerly faſhionable term, *les Gens comme il faut*, who have a certain degree of conſequence becauſe they have money or reſources enough to appear at every faſhionable place in London during the winter; have handſome houſes in or near ſome of the ſquares; and go in the ſummer to the places of public reſort. I take it for granted, that this is the world.—Well! and what do they know of my Althea? She has hardly ever been among them; her beauty has never been ſhewn where it might excite the admiration of the men, or the envy of the women. In ſuch a narrow circle as

Margate

Margate in the declining ſeaſon, the extraordinary reſolution you ſeemed to have taken, and the impertinent talk of two fooliſh women who knew you, excited a momentary, and only a momentary, curioſity. But in London, where ſomething new and ſtrange, or what plain people may think ſo, occurs every two or three days, the remarks that your marriage with a ruined man would make, would be hardly of an hour's duration. Is this, therefore, the world to whom my Althea would make the ſlighteſt ſacrifice of her own opinion? for whom ſhe would change one of her intentions?—But, as it has been well obſerved, that all perſons are of conſequence to themſelves, and thoſe who are the moſt ſo form an atmoſphere of their own around them, and call that the world, let us examine the world of Lady Dacres, to which I have no doubt but that ſhe will make bitter exclamations. You muſt know, my Althea,

that during your father's life ſhe was viſited, as fifty other ſuch perſonages are viſited, becauſe ſhe kept a card aſſembly, gave good dinners, had a title, and was known to poſſeſs a great deal of money: but among all the people who left cards at her houſe, or made money by them within it; among all who talked to her at St. James's when ſhe once a year made her courteſy there, or ate the dinners and courted the intereſt of Sir Audley, is there one, do you think, who would care a ſingle ſtraw whether or no they ever ſaw her again? Aſſuredly not.—*Her* world, therefore, is confined to two or three Dowagers, who, like her, love to ſave money, and who meet to wrangle and ſay ſpiteful things over their card-table, but are otherwiſe the beſt friends; that is, they talk about their œconomy, and compare notes; relate the conduct of their ſervants, and the prices they give for the various articles they have occaſion to buy;

buy; lament the dearneſs of proviſions, and the expence of a family; and wonder, if they who have ſuch handſome incomes cannot live, how ſuch a one can dreſs herſelf and daughters as ſhe does; and cannot imagine how Mr. Such-a-one lives as he does, but ſuppoſe there will be a violent end to ſuch daſhing doings. Such," continued Marchmont, "are the beings who conſtitute the world of Lady Dacres: with them I have no doubt but that we ſhall ſerve for exclamation and abuſe for a fortnight at leaſt: perhaps for three weeks or a month Lady Dacres will complain, and her dear friends will pity—but it ſeems to me that ſuch will be the very worſt that can happen.—And let me aſk my adored Althea if it can, if it ought to interfere with our world, which we ſhall find in our own hearts, in each other, and in our family?"

It may eaſily be believed that Althea acquieſced in reaſoning, which even

from a leſs beloved mouth ſhe might have heard with conviction. Nothing now remained but for Marchmont to obtain Althea's conſent to name the day when they ſhould be united. But here a real difficulty occurred—Althea was not of age; Lady Dacres was undoubtedly her neareſt relation, and ſtood, with Mr. Mohun, in place of her father, whoſe executors they were. To celebrate the marriage therefore was impoſſible, unleſs by going to Scotland, or by banns publiſhed in the pariſh church. The former plan was too expenſive to be thought of, even if Althea had not declared her decided repugnance to it. The laſt alone remained; and many were the objections that might be urged againſt it: with theſe, however, Marchmont contended as well as he could—ſtill enforcing the idea, that they were ſo little known in the part of England where they now reſided, that it was extremely unlikely the publicity of their intended

intended union ſhould reach the knowledge of the perſons from whom they deſired to conceal not only the marriage, but the return of Marchmont to England.

Mrs. Marchmont, who at her ſon's earneſt entreaty undertook to aſſiſt in conquering the ſcruples that again aſſailed Althea, felt their force increaſed by her apprehenſions that the perſecutions of Vampyre might be renewed with redoubled vigilance; — apprehenſions which none of the fearleſs arguments of Marchmont had ever appeaſed, and which ſhe now thought would be too certainly realized. However, as the experiment was of neceſſity to be made, and as ſince Marchmont's return no attempt whatever ſeemed to have been thought of on the part of his perſecutors to renew their fruitleſs and wanton attacks on his perſonal freedom, his mother, while her heart was ſtill oppreſſed with anxiety, endeavoured to put on the

ſemblance of hope ſhe was far from feeling. Certain that he would be miſerable without Althea, and having from ſome months obſervation convinced herſelf that Althea's happineſs was equally intereſted in her union with him, ſhe thought that ſhe had no right, merely from thoſe fears which depreſſion of ſpirit from long-continued ſorrow might perhaps make her weakly and unneceſſarily indulge, to raiſe any obſtacles to a marriage evidently advantageous to her ſon; while ſhe was too fond of him, and too partial to his really uncommon merit, not to think that he deſerved any woman, and that with him none could fail of finding happineſs in any ſtation of life.

Althea too, when alone, took reſolution ſteadily to conſider her ſituation; and ſoon convinced herſelf that the ſtep ſhe was about to take was dictated by reaſon as well as by inclination. Alone and unconnected in the world, at a period

riod when other young women are guarded by the vigilant affection of parents or of brothers, ſhe was deſtitute not only of perſonal protection, but of any defence againſt the injuſtice of Lady Dacres. She could not doubt, but that the more forlorn and unfriended her condition was, the more oppreſſion ſhe ſhould ſuffer from the cupidity and malice of her mother-in-law, aided, as it probably would be, by the profeſſional power of Mohun ſharpened by pique. The ſpirit, the firmneſs, and the talents of Marchmont, when he ſhould be empowered by his marriage to claim her rights, would, ſhe ſuppoſed, awe theſe two people into doing her tardy juſtice; and in the guardianſhip of the man ſhe loved, ſhe believed no real evil could overtake her. Humble fortune ſhe did not conſider as ſuch; and was very ſure that the moſt elevated, without Marchmont, would have been for her only ſplendid wretchedneſs.

Having by theſe arguments, added to the earneſt perſuaſions of Lucy and the milder expoſtulations of her mother, conquered the reluctance ſhe had at firſt felt to the public manner in which her marriage was to be announced — ſhe conſented that it ſhould be ſo, and five weeks after his return to England the ceremony was performed in the village church, that united Althea for ever to the happy Marchmont.

Marchmont, now eſteeming himſelf bleſt beyond the ordinary lot of man, was long unwilling to think of any thing that by recalling him to reflections on the future might embitter his preſent felicity. But Mr. Bargrave, the ſolicitor whom Everſley had employed for him, reminded him at the end of three weeks that it was highly neceſſary he ſhould, as the huſband of Althea, make a formal application to the executors of her father for the payment of her fortune. This he thought ſhould be done in perſon; and however unwilling he was to

go

go to London, yet determined not to ſhrink from any ſervice in which his adored Althea was intereſted, he appointed a time when Mr. Bargrave was to meet him, and ſet out on this unpleaſant expedition.

Lady Dacres, however, was not in town: but Mohun, who was attending the courts with his uſual aſſiduity, was to be heard of at his chambers in the Temple; and there Marchmont, accompanied by Mr. Bargrave, procured admiſſion to him.

Marchmont could not enter on this conference without feeling a great degree of curioſity to ſee how Mohun, whom he only knew by ſight, and by the invidious manner in which he had poſſeſſed himſelf of the houſe in Surry (which had belonged to his father, and was inhabited by his family), would receive a man he had treated with rudeneſs already, and who now was to appear before him as a claimant of property

which

which the ſage counſellor ſeemed indiſpoſed to relinquiſh, and in the ſtill more obnoxious character of a ſucceſsful and happy rival.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

In vain our plans of happineſs we raiſe:
Pain is our lot, and patience is our praiſe.

MOHUN, though he was well aware whom it was that he ſaw, and on what occaſion he was come, affected the moſt complete ignorance. This he did to put Marchmont in the moſt diſagreeable of all circumſtances, that of telling his name, and relating his buſineſs.

This, however, Marchmont did in a few words, and with that firmneſs and dignity which a certain degree of conſcious merit ought to give every man. Mohun, thrown back in his chair, his eyes

eyes half closed, and his lips drawn in, heard him almost to the end; and then, interrupting him with a cold and supercilious air, said, putting out his hand as in the action of silencing a person, "Well, Sir; well! You need not trouble yourself to say any more—You are come then to inform me, that you, a man acknowledging yourself not worth a shilling, without a profession, without any means of subsistence, have contrived to marry the daughter of my late friend Sir Audley Dacres. And what, Sir, do you expect me to say to such information? What should I say, but that I am very sorry for it?"

"It is perfectly indifferent to me," replied Marchmont, "what you say. I came not here to listen to your remarks, but to know when you will appoint a day for meeting me to pay or transfer the money which I am entitled to in right of my wife."

"What money?"

"Her

"Her fortune, to which you know her to have become entitled."

"Oh! no doubt you took care to inform yourſelf of all that; for indeed, however ſmall it is, and under whatever reſtrictions, it was ſtill an object to *you*."

"Look'ye, Mr. Mohun," ſaid Marchmont impatiently, "I will not be inſulted. What I aſk I have a right to know. From you I ſhall inſiſt upon an anſwer—and let me aſſure you, Sir ....."

"*Good* Sir!" interrupted Mohun contemptuouſly, "don't heat yourſelf. Be aſſured I am not to be moved by all that. As far as I am empowered to act under the will of my late friend, I ſhall certainly abide by his meaning, whomſoever it may diſpleaſe. If you think, or any of your wiſe adviſers will tell you, that you have a *remedy* againſt me—take it, Sir! take it; I have no manner

ner of objection to meeting you on legal ground."

He then called to his clerk, and, bidding him ſhew the gentlemen out, roſe from his ſeat, and marched into another room. Marchmont warmly expoſtulated, and might have done ſomething more as he paſſed, if Mr. Bargrave had not almoſt by force withheld him till Mohun diſappeared, and ſhut the door with the air of a man who held his viſitor too cheap to ſhew him the uſual forms of civility.

Indignation and rage poſſeſſed Marchmont at being obliged to ſubmit to ſuch treatment without inſtantly reſenting it: and Bargrave, with ſome difficulty, prevailed upon him to leave the houſe. His firſt emotions led him to go into a coffee-houſe and write to Mohun; but Bargrave entreated him to give himſelf only one hour's reflection, after which, he ſaid, he would no longer oppoſe any thing

thing he determined upon. Marchmont now miſſed the friendſhip and council of Everſley—He felt himſelf too much irritated to truſt to his own judgment; and of his preſent adviſer he knew but little, and had a prejudice againſt him on account of his profeſſion. In this turbulent ſtate of mind he walked from the Temple towards Charing Croſs, heedleſs of the ſurrounding objects, and uncertain whither he was going, when he ſaw a crowd gather round a waggon in the ſtreet, where there was a preſs of coaches, and heard ſome women exclaiming againſt the horror of the ſight, and what a ſhame it was that ſo many poor fellows ſhould ſuffer ſo.—Rouſed by the eagerneſs of one woman, who was ſpeaking and weeping, Marchmont aſked what was the matter.

"The matter!" anſwered the complainer: "Why it is a waggon-load of wounded ſoldiers from beyond ſea—ſome without legs, and ſome without arms: and,

and, for my part, I could tear my fleſh to ſee them; for I've loſt my only brother, and a fine lad as ever was ſeen, in this curſed war!"

"The better was his luck," ſaid a decent but rough-looking man who ſtood near her; "better to die ten times over than be crippled like thoſe poor fellows. However, 'tis not a tythe, no nor a fiftieth hardly, of only the laſt cargo; for moſt of them have been ſent on by water that they might not be ſeen, becauſe the people grumble." The man then paſſed on with a ſignificant ſhrug; and Marchmont, caſting his eyes towards the waggon, was ſtruck with the uniform of the regiment in which Captain Forreſter ſerved, and almoſt inſtantly recognized an old ſerjeant who belonged to his company. Marchmont ſtepped haſtily towards him, and, enquiring after Captain Forreſter, learned, with inexpreſſible ſatisfaction, that he had been exchanged, and either was arrived or would

would very ſoon be in London.—Having given the honeſt veteran a ſmall preſent, and promiſed to enquire after him, Marchmont now haſtened on towards Curzon-ſtreet, where his elder brother had a houſe, at which, when he was in town, Forreſter uſually reſided. All this while Bargrave had followed Marchmont, now and then venturing a gentle expoſtulation, to which, as he had it not in his nature to be rude to any man unprovoked, Marchmont anſwered as civilly as he could, though without having much attended to the pacific and legal arguments the Solicitor ſo ſedulouſly offered.——Theſe Bargrave renewed with more warmth and ſeriouſneſs as they got into quieter ſtreets, where he hoped to be heard to more advantage: but Marchmont, who had now an object towards which his immediate views were directed, walked faſter than ever; ſo that Bargrave, who was a ſhort man, not higher than Marchmont's elbow,

elbow, and immoderately fat, could by no means keep pace with his enormous ſtrides. The weather was extremely warm; and the poor lawyer, trotting along he knew not whither, yet dreading that his client was going to execute ſome act of violence, or at leaſt to prepare for one, took off his hat, puffed and blew, and, when he had by great exertion got near enough, ſeized the arm of his too active companion, ſaying, "Mr. Marchmont, Sir!—Conſider, Sir!—For mercy's ſake, Sir!"—The word mercy ſtruck on the ear of Marchmont. "Mercy?" anſwered he.—"My good friend, what have you lawyers to do with *Mercy?* Your buſineſs, you know, is only with *Juſtice.*"

"Well, but dear Sir, let me ſpeak!—Poh! poh!—Bleſs me, it is vaſtly hot!—Do, Sir—give me leave, Sir!—Suppoſe we walk a little ſlower. I hope there is no hurry.—Allow me juſt to ſtate to you——"

"State

"State what you will," replied Marchmont, "but prithee make haſte, for I ſhall be obliged to wiſh you a good morning in a minute—I am going to meet one of my beſt friends."

This expreſſion, and the vehemence with which Marchmont uttered it, ſeemed to imply ſeconds and piſtols; and, impreſſed with this idea, Bargrave began once more to plead for peace, or at leaſt only the legal weapons which he was himſelf able to wield.

"My dear Sir," ſaid he, "I only entreat to be attended to for five minutes—for five minutes only. You are unuſed to the practice of us lawyers.—You have never, perhaps, attended the Courts—elſe you would know, that when a great pleader behaves cavalierly, as perhaps Mr. Mohun might do to you to-day, he means nothing in the world, nothing in the whole world, rude to the individual: it is merely, as one may ſay, a way, a form, a manner—and any body that

that ſhould go for to reſent ſuch a thing would be reckoned vaſtly abſurd.—Lord, Sir, if you were to hear the things the counſel ſay to each other! Why, while they call one another learned brother and learned friend, they ſometimes, aye very often, are ſo abuſive, that you would think, perhaps, they muſt fight as ſoon as they come out of court.—Not at all, Sir—no ſuch thing—they are the beſt friends in the world."

"Very likely," replied Marchmont. "I can have no objection to the gentlemen's amuſing themſelves in that manner; but you muſt excuſe me if I decline being made the object, out of court or in it either, of Mohun's inſolence."—"Why, my dear good Sir," reſumed Bargrave, "what can you do?"

"It is not neceſſary, I believe, Mr. Bargrave, for you to enquire," cried Marchmont a little peeviſhly.—"Good God! Sir—why, do but conſider—why, Sir, you cannot challenge Mr. Mohun?"

"Why

"Why not?—Does he not call himſelf a gentleman? and is it not all a man *can* do when inſulted as you ſaw him inſult me, to write as I have written?"

"Well; but, Sir, Mr. Mohun will not fight."

"Very likely not; but if the impudent braggart will not be compelled to behave like a gentleman in *any* way, I will kick him wherever I meet him."

"Kick him!" exclaimed the attorney, "kick him! kick Mr. Mohun?—Why, Sir, he'll have a Chief-Juſtice's warrant againſt you—he will upon my ſoul . . ."

At that moment Marchmont arrived at the door that, from its number, he knew to belong to the houſe whither Forreſter had directed him. He knocked eagerly at it. A ſervant preſently appeared, who, on his earneſt enquiry for Captain Forreſter, imagined he knew ſomething of his arrival; and, hearing his name, told him that his maſter, Lord Roch-

dale, was at home, and would be glad to ſee him.

Marchmont, diſappointed at not finding his friend arrived, yet anxious to converſe with one ſo nearly related to him, ſlightly wiſhed Mr. Bargrave a good morning, and walked into the houſe. While Bargrave returned to his chambers in Lincoln's-Inn, not much delighted with his hot walk, nor with the little attention Marchmont ſeemed to give to his advice—"Yes, yes," muttered he to himſelf, "he will have a Chief-Juſtice's warrant after him—let him reckon upon that."

Marchmont found, in Lord Rochdale, the elder brother of his friend, a young man greatly reſembling him in perſon, yet without that generous warmth and active ſpirit of benevolence which gave ſo much intereſt to the manner, and ſo much energy to the character, of the younger brother. Lord Rochdale, from

from the meſſage his ſervant had delivered, imagined Marchmont to be ſome officer who came with intelligence of his brother, for whoſe return and health he ſeemed warmly intereſted: and when Marchmont explained who he was, Lord Rochdale expreſſed himſelf with all the kindneſs and civility it was in his nature to ſhew; deſired to ſee him again; enquired where he could wait upon him; and aſſured him, that when Lord Stanwarden returned out of the North, he would join with all the Forreſter family in teſtifying how true a ſenſe they had of Mr. Marchmont's generous and ſerviceable friendſhip towards a perſon ſo dear to them all.

Marchmont, whoſe ardent ſpirit and ingenuous temper induced him to ſpeak highly of his friend and openly of himſelf, related the riſe of his acquaintance with Captain Forreſter. Lord Rochdale heard him with attention; and when Marchmont took his leave, he was aſ-

ſured, that as ſoon as Captain Forreſter arrived, he ſhould have notice, by letter, according to the direction he left.

The moment Marchmont got into the ſtreet after this interview, all that had paſſed with Mohun recurred to him. The hope of being able to conſult Forreſter, the ſatisfaction of ſeeing him, as he had expected to do, returned well to England after ſo many perils, had for a while ſuſpended the pain inflicted by the inſults of Mohun, and the pecuniary diſtreſs to which injuſtice muſt expoſe the lovely being to whom his fate was united. But now it all ruſhed upon his mind at once. He ſaw that he had for his adverſary a man who, to the natural hardneſs and arrogance of his temper and his profeſſion, added a perſonal diſlike to him; and he felt himſelf equally unable to bear his affronts patiently, or to contend againſt the advantages his law talents gave him to defend the wrong. Vexed to have

ſuch

ſuch a repulſe to relate to Althea, and altogether uncertain how to act, he went into a coffee-houſe, and wrote to Everſley an account of what had happened. He forbore to expreſs any intention of perſonally reſenting the inſolence of Mohun, which he thought the prudence of Everſley might oppoſe; but deſired in general his advice, and ſtated his fears leſt chicane and quirk, dreadful weapons in the hands of ſuch a man as Mohun, ſhould deprive Althea, at leaſt for a very long time, of the two thouſand pounds, which previous to his marriage he had, by the moſt binding deed Bargrave could imagine, ſettled wholly on her.

To a generous and liberal mind there is nothing ſo impoſſible to ſupport as the unbluſhing injuſtice of men who commit robbery and call it *legal*; and now, that the very means provided by men in ſociety for their mutual pro-

tection ſhould be converted into thoſe of oppreſſion, plunder, and ruin, ſeemed ſuch a defect, ſuch a blot in the hiſtory of a great nation, that Marchmont could not endure to think of it. Already ſuffering from the fatal law entanglements of his father, which had reduced his family from affluence to indigence, he held the whole fraternity in a ſort of abhorrence, almoſt forgetting his natural candour when he thought of them.—Yet there are, undoubtedly, in this profeſſion, men of equal integrity and ability. It is only to be lamented, that even the moſt eminent ſhould adhere to the maxim of undertaking any cauſe for which they are engaged, however unjuſt may be the pretenſions of the client, and that

"To make the worſe appear the better reaſon"

is often the purpoſe for which the moſt brilliant eloquence is exerted, by men who,

who, in private life, are the models of moral virtue and unſhaken integrity.

Perhaps no man in any rank or profeſſion had ever ſo little claim to theſe laſt virtues as he in whoſe power the little fortune of Althea was placed.—Profligate, proud, violent and conſequential, totally regardleſs of the feelings of others, or rather delighting in his power of inflicting pain, Mohun had, in a thouſand inſtances, deſerved the brief character given of the tyrant Henry the Eighth. Unprincipled and ſavage even in his intercourſe with women, he had never been tempted to think of marriage but in the inſtance of Althea. Her beauty had made an impreſſion on his ferocious heart, which he could not now recollect without feeling the moſt diabolical hatred againſt the man who had, under all the diſadvantages of poverty, ſupplanted him.—Diſdaining, as he generally did, to look back on any circumſtances that had diſpleaſed or

mortified him, he however remembered that Marchmont (whom he knew by ſight) had been at Capelſtoke about the time that Althea, reſolutely diſmiſſing him, had preferred the diſmal ſecluſion of Eaſtwoodleigh to the opulence and ſplendour ſhe might have enjoyed as his wife.—Not doubting, therefore, on putting circumſtances together, but that Althea had even then an attachment to this undone wanderer, and that her refuſal of *him* had been its conſequence; he thought with the moſt inveterate rancour of the man who had thus been preferred, and dwelt with malignant delight on the power he now poſſeſſed to oppreſs and perſecute theſe unfortunate people:—and it was too certain that he poſſeſſed this power to a greater degree than they, much as they dreaded him, were aware of.

To theſe faculties for hurting them, Marchmont's warmth of temper unhappily added another. While he wrote

to

to Everſley, he recalled, indignantly recalled, every circumſtance of the ſupercilious and inſolent treatment he had experienced from Mohun. His blood boiled in his veins, as he dwelt on the ſcornful, the unworthy manners, towards him, of a man to whom he merely applied as a matter of right, and who, even if he were not diſpoſed to admit his claims, could have no motive, but meaning directly to inſult him, for forgetting he was a gentleman. Reaſon and experience had in a great meaſure conquered the prejudices which his father (a bigot to family pride, and to what uſed to be called *Toryiſm*) had taught him to cheriſh; yet the ſentiments of the old cavaliers, the blood of an ancient and high-minded family, acting on the warm and active ſpirits of three-and-twenty, were altogether of too inflammable a nature not to ſilence the voice of prudence, and ſet at nought the pacific advice of Bargrave, to which indeed he had

hardly liſtened. He could not bear to think of returning to Althea to relate that he had been treated like a ſlave, and had tamely endured it; endured it too, when her rights and her property were in queſtion. He determined therefore not to ſay, when he arrived at home, what had paſſed, and to wait in expectation of ſome farther explanation from Mohun, which he thought could not fail to be brought on by the following ſhort

LETTER.

"SIR,

"When I this morning applied to you, I ſuppoſed I was addreſſing myſelf to a profeſſional man and a gentleman. In the former character you ſeem determined not to give me the anſwer or the ſatisfaction I have a right to demand—I therefore expect, Sir, if you perſiſt in this reſolution, that you will think of

replying

replying to me in the latter.—I am to be heard of at this place; and, expecting your early notice,

"I am, Sir,

"Your humble ſervant,

"E. A. MARCHMONT.

"Cecil-Street Coffee-Houſe,

"June 22d."

Having diſpatched this by a porter, Marchmont proceeded to the ſtables where he had left the horſe which had brought him out of Kent, and returned to his family.

He found Althea and his three ſiſters waiting at the gate of the court that ſurrounded their little habitation. As ſoon as by the light of the moon they were ſure it was he, each expreſſed her joy at his return; and Althea, taking his arm as they walked into the houſe, ſaid—"We have been uneaſy at your ſtay, Marchmont:—after what you ſaid yeſterday when you left us, we had

hopes you would return early in the day, and your mother has ſo alarmed herſelf that ſhe is quite ill."

Marchmont adored his mother, and his heart now ſhrunk from the idea of the pain ſhe would feel did ſhe know the truth; nor was the tender ſolicitude of Althea leſs diſtreſſing to him. He made therefore an effort entirely to ſtifle his feelings, and conceal the true ſtate of his mind; and though he ſomewhat overacted his part, his mother, his wife, and his ſiſters, were too happy, in ſeeing him returned, to allow themſelves to make any remarks that might diſturb their ſatisfaction.

The next day, however, the taſk that he had impoſed upon himſelf became more difficult. Unuſed to diſſimulation, and with a countenance that expreſſed every emotion of his heart, he knew not how to evade either the enquiring looks of Mrs. Marchmont, or the queſtions naturally aſked by Althea

as

as to the event of his application to Mohun. He could only anſwer in general, that he ſaw Mohun only for a moment, and that he was to go to town again the following Wedneſday; when they were to meet on the buſineſs.

Though this account, and the evident wiſh to eſcape from the converſation, which Althea remarked, were far from being ſatisfactory, yet ſhe forbore to teaſe him with any farther queſtions, convinced that to his judgment ſhe might implicitly truſt the management of their affairs, and that whenever he had any thing pleaſant to relate ſhe ſhould certainly know it. She aſſumed, therefore, an air of cheerfulneſs, in the hope of diſpelling the dejection which, in deſpite of all her endeavours to conquer it, hung over Mrs. Marchmont, as well as a ſort of tranſient chagrin that occaſionally ſeemed to mark the features of Marchmont himſelf, and which ſhe thought

thought he made efforts (not always ſucceſsful) to drive away.

Fenchurch, his faithful ſervant, who had lived with him from a boy, had at Marchmont's own deſire left him, and landed at Plymouth, when he was on his way to France. It was with the utmoſt difficulty that he had been prevailed upon to do this; but not being able to endure the thoughts of entering into any other ſervice, he had returned to his father, who was a ſmall farmer in the north of Devonſhire, where he entreated his maſter to ſend to him whenever he ſhould mean to take a ſervant, in whatever country he might be. Marchmont had a great regard for the man, and held this promiſe ſacred: as ſoon, therefore, as his marriage was certain, and a ſervant became neceſſary to him, he had written to this honeſt fellow, who inſtantly haſtened to reſume the ſervice of a maſter whom he loved, and he had now been ſome time eſtabliſhed in it.

It

It was to him, therefore, that Marchmont gave the charge of going to London, the next day after his interview with Mohun and the letter he had written, to ſee if there were any anſwer to it left at the coffee-houſe; charging him, if he found any, not to deliver it on his return in the preſence of his mother, or of his wife or ſiſters. Fenchurch, ever anxious for his maſter's ſafety, obeyed, but not without uneaſineſs. He returned with uncommon expedition. There was no letter from Mohun—Another and another day paſſed—The people of the coffee-houſe had then been directed to ſend any letters to him, but from Mohun none arrived. Fenchurch, therefore, was again diſpatched to London, with orders to go with a verbal meſſage to Mr. Mohun at his chambers, ſaying, that he came from Mr. Marchmont, deſiring an anſwer to a letter left the Saturday before. Fenchurch returned with his uſual celerity: he

he had ſeen the clerk at Mr. Mohun's chambers, who told him that he knew nothing of any anſwer—that Mr. Mohun went out of town on Saturday evening, and, as Term was now over, would only return for a few days before he left London for the whole ſummer.

If any thing could add to the affronting inſolence of the reception which Mohun had given to Marchmont, it was this rude and contemptuous manner of declaring that he was beneath any anſwer at all. All the philoſophy that Marchmont thought he had acquired in the ſchool of adverſity, was inſufficient to ſave him from ſuffering the moſt violent paroxyſm of rage and indignation. Dreading the enquiries and even the looks of his family, leſt they ſhould diſcover how much he was diſturbed, he walked haſtily from the houſe, though it was late in the evening, as if he hoped to appeaſe the agitation of his mind by action. Not far from the habitation of his

his mother was the large and well wooded park of a nobleman, in which ſince his return he had taken many delightful evening walks with Althea and his ſiſters. Towards it, almoſt mechanically, he now directed his ſteps: he croſſed a broad green lane that led along under the park paling: the moon, now at full, threw acroſs it the long ſhadows of the trees in the park that bounded it, and of the thorns and bruſh-wood that grew in a road ſo little frequented; when proceeding towards a ſtile, Marchmont thought he ſaw a man haſtily paſs from one to another of theſe ſhrubby tufts. Had the man, whoever he was, ſtill continued his way, he would have concluded it to be a labourer, and would hardly have noticed him; but, as it was, there was an evident deſire of concealment that indicated ſome bad intention. To detect ſuch he thought every man's buſineſs; and though he had no weapon in his hand, not even a ſtick, yet being of a fearleſs

fearleſs diſpoſition, he ſtepped forward to the place where he believed the man had ſkulked among the buſhes, but ſaw nobody. He forced himſelf between them — ſtopped, liſtened, went round on the other ſide—Again he ſtopped, and, looking forward under the paling, thought he ſaw at a conſiderable diſtance ſomething creeping along in the ſhade they and the trees above them made. Marchmont, thoughtleſs of conſequences, darted after it. The man, for ſuch he with difficulty diſtinguiſhed the figure to be, now roſe to his natural ſtature, and ran with ſpeed towards the high road at about a mile diſtance. Marchmont, ſwift of foot, kept him ſtill in ſight, and gained upon him: but juſt before he reached the road, he unaccountably diſappeared; and Marchmont, after a long ſearch, recollecting how far he had been led from the houſe by a circumſtance which, ſuſpicious as it was, he might never get explained; and being

being afraid that he ſhould give ſome uneaſineſs at home by ſo late a walk, returned the neareſt way he could, ſtill meditating on Mohun.—When he entered the houſe he found, as they all knew his fondneſs for walking by moonlight, that they had not been alarmed. Althea and Lucy gently chid him for not making them of the party: he anſwered them in the ſame tone, and they all ſet down to their ſimple ſupper.

Lucy, full of animation and ſpirit, was now engaged in a deſcription of a party who had that day been (to the wonder of the family) to pay a bridal viſit to Althea. It conſiſted of a widow and her three maiden ſiſters, all ladies between fifty and ſixty, who reſided on a very handſome income, the greateſt part of the year, at a very good family houſe about four miles off. But having unfortunately nothing to do but to ſee that their manſion and gardens were kept in order—that their coach-horſes looked

ſleek,

ſleek, and their ſervants were all orderly—buſineſs which, ſettled as it had been for years in a regular routine, was inſufficient to occupy any one of them—they were under the neceſſity of turning their talents to the inſpection of their neighbours' affairs. Even the humble and retired family of Mrs. Marchmont at ſuch a diſtance could not eſcape their curioſity. The farmer of whom ſhe rented the houſe was a tenant of theirs, and ſhe had hardly been ſettled a fortnight before moſt of the particulars of her hiſtory were known to theſe four Sybils. Though all that could be heard of Mrs. Marchmont ought to have excited only reſpect, ſhe was ſo much reduced in circumſtances, that ſuch rich antiquities would not have thought of cultivating an acquaintance with her, but to gratify their inſatiable thirſt of knowing every thing that related to every body. However, as they foreſaw that they muſt in the courſe of this communication

munication ſend their coach to fetch the family, an operation to which they and their coachman had an equal averſion, they had heſitated and doubted, till Marchmont's return, and Althea's marriage, irritated their deſire of information and of remark to ſuch a degree, that, as it was ſummer, Mrs. Aconite and the three amiable ladies her ſiſters, the Mrs. Henbanes, had ventured to an afternoon viſit. They had known ſomething of Lady Dacres when ſhe was Miſs Gunſton, and longed to ſee her daughter-in-law, who had been repreſented at Margate, where they paſſed ſix weeks every year, as ſuch a very eccentric young perſon.

This firſt eſſay had in a great meaſure been diſappointed—for Althea was walking with Marchmont when they arrived; and though ſhe returned to the houſe before they went, ſhe did not chooſe to appear. Lucy, therefore, was deſcribing theſe their unexpected and unwelcome

welcome viſitors to her brother and Althea.

"They are juſt ſuch *dry ſpecimens*," ſaid ſhe, alluding to Althea's botanical collection, "as you deſcribed Lady Barbara Newmarch to be. The widow lady is rather leſs a curioſity than the reſt; for ſhe affects great gravity, which becomes her age—though I am ſure ſhe is the moſt malignant and ſpiteful of them all. But Mrs. Henbane is a politician, fierce as ten furies. She talks of revolutions, till ſhe really looks fit for a ſtraight waiſtcoat; and no poiſſarde of Paris ever hunted an ariſtocrat in a fine coat with more fury than ſhe would fly at any unfortunate wight who ſhould venture to ſay that any republican might ſtill be poſſibly a human being. I proteſt ſhe frightened me, and counteracted her own ends; for ſhe wanted to know of what party *you* were, brother, and how you got through France; for ſhe had heard, I cannot gueſs how, that you have

have been there. As to Mama and Amelia, they had no inclination to anſwer her, nor I neither. However, I was going to ſay ſomething, when ſhe burſt out again like a new eruption of Mount Veſuvius; and if I had ſaid a word ſhe did not like, I'm ſure ſhe would have got up and ſhaken me. So I let her rave on, and ſaid nothing.—The next, Mrs. Lydia Henbane, and the youngeſt, who is ſtill called Miſs Deborah, though I'm ſure ſhe is ſeventy, both began talking at the ſame time, and therefore luckily there was not much occaſion for me to ſpeak. I cannot tell exactly what they ſaid; but I thought Mrs. Lydia praiſed ſome publication on the ſubject of politics, and Mrs. (cry her mercy!) *Miſs* Deborah ſpoke of the laſt new faſhions. I knew no more of one than of the other of theſe topics; and right glad was I to be releaſed from them all, for I fancied myſelf ſurrounded by Madame Hecate, and Meſdemoiſelles

moiſelles Alecto, Tyſiphone, and Mægara, her maids of honour."—Mrs. Marchmont, though ſhe had learned to conſider ſuch people with the calmeſt indifference, herſelf could not help ſmiling at the vivacity of her daughter; yet ſhe was about gently to check that ſpirit of ſatire which from her gaiety of heart, and acuteneſs of perception, Lucy ſometimes indulged too far, when ſhe was ſuddenly interrupted by a noiſe at the front door of the houſe. It ſeemed like violent blows given by one perſon to another, who cried out and remonſtrated. Marchmont at the ſound of diſtreſs leaped up; and though his mother, turning pale and trembling, entreated him not to go out, at leaſt without Fenchurch, for whom ſhe violently rang the bell, he ran in a moment to the door.—His mother, Althea, and his ſiſters, ſtill endeavouring to detain him, preſſed thither alſo; and Fenchurch, with fear and terror in his countenance, ruſhed

ruſhed after him. It was too late—The moment he put his foot out of the door, he was roughly ſeized in the King's name by two ill-looking fellows, while four others ſurrounded him. He was at no loſs to gueſs who they were. He deſired them to ſuffer him to return into the houſe; and approaching his mother, who, unleſs ſupported by Althea and Lucy, would have ſunk on the ground before him, he beſought her not to increaſe his diſtreſs by her agonies; then turning to Althea, who though pale and trembling ſeemed to attempt ſomething like reſolution, his voice faltered, and he could only ſay, "My Althea, my angel!" The men now led him between them into the parlour; the four others followed—and while one of the ruffians deſired Fenchurch to go out, which however he refuſed, the others ſat down with great familiarity, and he who ſeemed to be the principal among them thus began:

"So, 'Squire! we are like to be better acquainted at laſt. I was afeard we ſhould not have met no more, you and I—but now it's my belief we ſhall have time to get thorough good frinds, hah? Don't be frought, Ma'am," addreſſing himſelf to Mrs. Marchmont, to whom her terrified daughters were adminiſtering drops and water; "we won't hurt the young 'Squire. Never you fear neither, young ladies, we'll do un no harm—Nor I never likes, not I, to put ladies, and above all ſuch pretty ladies, in any quondary.—We'll not do his Honour the ſmalleſt harm upon yearth—Only it's my believe he muſt take a ſmall trip with us to Maidſtone; unleſs, perhaps, he can find frinds more nigher to help ſettle theſe ſmall matters here."

"What are they?" ſaid Marchmont, in a calm tone.

"Why, in the firſt place I've got two writs againſt you. I fancy you gueſſes the names to um—Eh, Maſter Marchmont!

mont!—Old ſtories, you know—The ſame as we uſed to have a few journies about afore you ſet off on your travels beyond ſea.—There, Sir; there's the ſtuff. You ſee the names and the ſums. Both together are—aye, let me ſee—*nineteen hundred and ninety-ſix pounds!* I'm ſure I hope your Honour will get bail with all my heart—and then, no doubt, you'll not find it hard to get t'other matter ſettled—though 'tis rather a toughiſh job, as one may ſay, that there."

"What do you mean?" ſaid Marchmont: "to what do you allude?"

"Why, Maſter, only this—You've a thought proper to ſend a challenge."

"A challenge!"

"Aye, your Honour—Our gemmen of the law, look ye, are of a peaceful diſpoſition; and ſo Counſellor Mohun thought it right, you ſee, to put you under a little ſort of arreſt, by order of

my Lord Chief Juſtice, juſt till ſuch time as you may cool upon it a bit."

"Cowardly ſcoundrel!" exclaimed Marchmont, "baſe poltroon!—Well, Sir! and what is to be the conſequence of this?"

"Oh! nothing—nothing in the world, Sir—but that you muſt juſt be put into cuſtody till you find ſecurity to keep the peace—But that there buſineſs indeed is no affair of mine. That worthy gemman yonder has all that in his dippartumment—Come, Bobby, my man, ſpeak to his Honour."

Another of the men then approached Marchmont, and ſaid he had orders to arreſt him under the Chief-Juſtice's warrant, which he read; and concluded with ſaying, that he muſt either go into confinement, or be bound himſelf in the penalty of three hundred pounds, and find two ſureties in three hundred each, for keeping the peace.

Marchmont

Marchmont now ſaw immediate impriſonment before him. Far from the only two friends who would come forward to ſave him from it, had it been in their power, either of theſe arreſts was more than ſufficient to condemn him to long, if not to perpetual confinement. The cruelty of loading him with theſe double and heavy chains, could, he knew, be owing to nothing but the reſolution of his perſecutors to put it out of the reach of any friends he might have to ſave him, ſince the whole of the ſecurities demanded amounted to three thouſand pounds. He was in a neighbourhood where he had not a ſingle acquaintance; and nothing remained for him but to endeavour to explain with calm reſolution the miſerable truth to his agoniſed family, and to ſoften to them as much as he could the pain of this dreadful ſeparation.

He turned to Althea, who pale as aſhes, but tearleſs and immoveable, ſat

by him during this ſcene. "Althea, my deareſt love," ſaid he, "now is the moment to ſhew that preſence of mind, that reaſonable fortitude, and truly feminine courage, which I have before had occaſion to admire. Do not, my angel, by yielding to this ſhock, give me cauſe to fear that you repent ſharing ſo bitter a lot; and if you love me, think leſs of ſome trifling preſent inconveniences that I may go through, than of preſerving the deareſt part of me—yourſelf; while you become the heavenly comforter of my mother."

"Whatever you bid me do," anſwered Althea, trying in vain to command her faltering voice, "whatever you tell me will give you the leaſt comfort, that I will do. But, remember, Marchmont, we do not part: whitherſoever you are obliged to go, thither I will accompany you."

"Impoſſible, my love! To-night I apprehend

apprehend theſe honeſt gentlemen will take me from hence."

"Yes, that's pretty near the right of the thing," ſaid one of the men, roughly; "you muſt go to Maidſtone to-night, that's for ſartin.—You may move yourſelf up to Banco by habbus coppas as ſoon as you will ater-rard."

"My dear Althea!" reſumed Marchmont, "you ſee how it is—Go! my dear girl, to my mother (Mrs. Marchmont had left the room in an agony not to be deſcribed)—try to induce her to bear better this ſevere blow—nothing will do it ſo effectually as ſeeing you calm."

"You will not go then before I return?" ſaid Althea, as ſhe left the room.

"Certainly not. But, gentlemen, you ſee how my family are diſtreſſed—Could you not let me ſpeak a few words to my mother and my wife in another room?"

"God bleſs you, my Maſter, how can we do any ſuch a thing?—No, no! that's quite out of character: you may ſay as much as ever you will to the ladies, one and all, but your Honour muſt not go out of the ſight of ſome two of us upon no account."

"Well, then," ſaid Marchmont, meeting with all the courage he could this bitter foretaſte of impriſonment, "I ſuppoſe all I have to do is to prepare, ſtill favoured by your attendance, for my removal. Tell me how this removal is to be made at ſuch an hour, and in a place where a chaiſe is not to be had in a moment?"

"Why, as to that matter, we ſhould not to be ſure much mind ſtaying with your Honour here till to-morrow," cried one of theſe authoriſed ruffians; "that is upon proper conſiderations, and the like: but then we muſt make bold to deſire you'll ſit up with us; for

as

as Muſter Trickman there ſays, who knows all our buſineſs as well as ere a man in Englunt, you mid'nt no how be out of our ſight. But I warrant you would not have no objection now to us four; there are but four on us; we've ſent tothers to wait without; I ſay you'd have no objection, I dares for to ſay, for my friend Trickman, who is well to do I aſſure you, a near kinſman of Lawyer Vampyre's, and honeſt Bob Perkin, and Jemmy Lambeth here, and me, to ſit down with you, and have a little ſomething to keep us alive and awake, till ſich time as we can all be a-jogging in the morning?"

"No," ſaid Marchmont, "I thank you for your civility, ſince I ſuppoſe you mean it as ſuch; but my family would only be kept in a greater degree of ſuffering by ſuch an arrangement, which would anſwer little purpoſe—ſo if you will tell me how I am to go, I will only ſtay to have a few neceſſaries

packed up, and will be ready to go with you."

"As you chooſe, Muſter Machmon," ſaid the fellow in a very ſurly manner; "we never wants to force civility upon nobody; and as for how you be to be *conwayed*, vy the vay is to fitch a chai from Sittingbone. Here, you—Dick Jenks," calling to one of the gang who waited without, "ſtep and tell the chai ve ordered to be ready, to come quickly."

"You took that precaution?" ſaid Marchmont.

"Aye, aye, Maſter, we thought it right," anſwered Trickman, "for we were pretty ſure of nabbing you. No loop-holes now, Young 'Squire, to crip out on—hah!—Don't you remember the dodgings you gived us at that there hell of an ould place there doun in the weſt? My kinſman, Lawyer Vampyre, was plaguely out in a's reckoning, but we made

made ſurer work on't now. We took care to be upon ſartin grounds."

"I fancy," ſaid Marchmont, "it was ſome one of this party that paſſed me to-night in the lane."

"'Twas I, 'Squire," ſaid a tall fierce figure, with a cut over his eye, and a moſt diabolical countenance, "I dodged you from the houſe into that lane.—I did not much like it; I thought you had ſmelt a rat, and had a mind to be off. I don't know what you took me for—but I'm ſure you gave me a rare breathing."

"I do not believe I much miſtook your character," ſaid Marchmont; "but be that as it may, I ſuppoſe you all expect to drink, as I think it is always cuſtomary for you worthy operators of the law to be jolly on theſe occaſions." He then rang the bell for Fenchurch, who entered looking more dead than alive, and bade him bring ſome ſtrong beer and brandy, though the whole ſtock

of both in the houſe was very inconſiderable. Fenchurch obeyed—and the fellows then demanded to eat. All that was in the larder was then ſet before them, on which they fell to without ceremony; while Marchmont prepared himſelf for parting with Althea, who now returned into the room. She was apparently calm, but her expreſſive countenance teſtified what ſhe felt.—Marchmont eagerly enquired after his mother.

"She is better," ſaid Althea, "and wiſhes to ſee you."

"I cannot go to her," anſwered Marchmont, "that is impoſſible. But let Lucy, if my mother can do without her, come to me; and do you, my dearest love, ſit down and compoſe yourſelf. Why ſhould I diſguiſe the truth, when, after all, it muſt be known, it muſt be endured? I am not to be out of theſe men's ſight till I am ſecured in priſon.—

Thither

Thither it is better immediately to go—a chaiſe is coming to take me thither."

"And me alſo," ſaid Althea, with courage: "do not imagine, Marchmont, that any thing ſhall divide us. To be where you are not, while ſuffering under circumſtances ſo cruel, would be to me more intolerable than a thouſand priſons."

"Good God, Althea! can I bear the thoughts of taking my wife, of taking you to ſuch a place? Impoſſible—Do not, pray do not diſtreſs me by the propoſal."

"Marchmont," ſaid Althea, in an earneſt and determined manner, "it is the firſt time I have ever made a requeſt to you—and will you refuſe me? Will you mortify me by making me ſuſpect you think ſo poorly of me, as that I would ſhrink from a few perſonal inconveniences? Wherever you are it is fit I ſhould be."

"But,"

"But," added Marchmont, in a lower voice, "one of theſe men, I am perſuaded, will inſiſt upon going in the chaiſe with me. Can I ſuffer you to be ſo accompanied?"

"Send then for another chaiſe," anſwered Althea, "for my reſolution is fixed—nothing can change it."

Marchmont then addreſſed himſelf to the men, and enquired what accommodations he could have where he was going?

They told him he might be indulged with a room upon paying for it.

He then aſked if he could be allowed to go in the chaiſe unaccompanied by one of them, as his wife inſiſted upon going with him.

He was anſwered, "that all thoſe things muſt be conſidered.—They had horſes in waiting; and if his Honour thought proper for to make a proper preſent for their civility, over and above the

the cuſtomary fee, why they'd no objection againſt obliging him."

Marchmont, finding Althea reſolute, acceded to every thing ſhe demanded. She then haſtened to put up ſuch neceſſaries as they had both immediate occaſion for, and was ſoon ready, with a ſerene though wan countenance, to attend their rude conductors. To take leave of his mother was the moſt dreadful part of what Marchmont had to undergo: he thought indeed it was far better they ſhould not meet; and Lucy undertook in appearance to perſuade her mother not to inſiſt upon it. She left the room, and returned in a few moments to her brother to ſay her mother was tolerably tranquil, and acquieſced: but the truth was, that after having been a few moments up ſtairs, the recollection of all ſhe had gone through to avoid this evil, and the cruel idea of her ſon in perpetual impriſonment,

ment, had ſuch an effect on her enfeebled frame, that ſhe had fallen from one fainting fit to another, and when Marchmont and Althea departed was totally inſenſible.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

L'indigence va flétrir tes beaux jours; tu vas connoître les larmes cruelles qu'arrache la néceſſité.

SOMETHING more than ſixty pounds, part of it the laſt receipt of Mrs. Marchmont's annuity, and part of it a loan from Everſley, which he inſiſted on making, and had remitted in a letter, was the whole ſtock of money in poſſeſſion of the Marchmont family at this period. Althea had about fifteen guineas of her own, the remains of her laſt dividend on her aunt's legacy. This, and ten guineas from the general ſtock, was all Marchmont would take. He left

left the reſt with Lucy, entreating her to exert herſelf to conſole her mother, and ſupport the ſinking ſpirits of Amelia.—"Remember," ſaid he, as he took leave of her, "remember, my dear Lucy, that by bearing evils well we deprive them of half the power of hurting us; and that there is no difference between a ſtrong and a feeble mind, but their different powers of enduring the calamities of life. There are two ways, my ſweet love, of ſhewing the extreme concern that I know my ſituation gives you; but one of theſe ways will mitigate, the other will increaſe my diſtreſs.—Which will my Lucy chooſe?"

The poor girl, trying to ſtifle the anguiſh ſhe felt, promiſed to exert herſelf; but when the chaiſe, ſo guarded, left the door, all her reſolution was inſufficient—till the dread of aggravating the agonies of her mother again reſtored to her ſome degree of fortitude.

Althea,

Althea, for whom a priſon loſt its horrors when to ſooth and conſole Marchmont was in queſtion, not only bore the firſt ſhock of entering ſuch a diſmal abode with an unchanged countenance, but aſſumed a degree of calm cheerfulneſs; which, though it coſt her ſome effort, was beheld by Marchmont with admiration and gratitude, and it left him more at liberty, than if he had at once had to tranquillize her ſpirits and provide for her accommodation; while his own heart, accuſing him of having brought this adored creature into a ſituation ſo unworthy of her, was oppreſſed with a degree of deſpondence, which he would never have felt had he had only his own troubles to contend with.

With ſo little money to command as he poſſeſſed, and not knowing where, when it was gone, he could obtain a ſupply, nothing was more bitter than the neceſſity of gratifying the demands of

of the vultures who had dragged him to confinement. Theſe were exorbitant, and preferred with as much audacity as if the ruffians had conferred a favour in executing the writs againſt him. It was above all grating to him to be compelled the moſt liberally to pay the principal of them, who called himſelf the kinſman of Vampyre, and boaſted of being employed by him at Eaſtwoodleigh. It is hardly neceſſary to ſay, that his name, as attorney, was to the writs for debt; and Mohun had on this occaſion alſo employed him.

No accommodations were to be procured that night—but Marchmont, as he was now in a place of ſecurity, was allowed to be left alone with Althea; and after he had ſatisfied the harpies that ſurrounded him, and diſpatched Fenchurch back to his mother, to aſſure her that he and Althea were well, and to bring him an account of thoſe for whom he was ſo anxious at home, he ſat down

by

by Althea, who, notwithſtanding her alarm and fatigue, ſtill ſupported her ſpirits. But when Marchmont took her hand, and enquired whether ſhe could forgive him for having brought her into ſuch a ſcene, they both loſt their reſolution for a moment, and Marchmont wept as he preſſed her to his boſom.—Althea was the firſt to recover from this tranſient weakneſs. She aſſured him, that with him all places were alike to her; that, under his protection, ſhe feared nothing.—"My dear friend," ſaid ſhe, "why ſhould we, even for a moment, yield to deſpondence?—Let fear and deſpondence be for the guilty.—*We* may be unfortunate, but we ſhall not be unhappy—for ſhall we not be together?—ſhall we not ſtill enjoy the conſciouſneſs of innocence and honour? Believe me, Marchmont, I am ſo far from repenting the ſtep I took when I united my deſtiny with yours, that, were I to-morrow at liberty, I would

do

do the ſame, even though all that has happened within this laſt day were as certain as it now is. The only thing I apprehend in impriſonment is, your loſing your health from confinement."

"And you, my angel, my Althea!" exclaimed Marchmont paſſionately, "do you fear nothing for yourſelf? Good God!—that you ſhould be the inmate of a place like this!"

He was too much moved to proceed, but Althea continued calmly to ſpeak.—"No, Marchmont, I do not fear illneſs for myſelf; for I have been more uſed to confinement, and women are conſtitutionally more ſedentary. Give not yourſelf a moment's pain about me, but conſider only what meaſures are moſt immediately neceſſary. Let us write to that dear good Everſley—Captain Forreſter is probably, by this time, come to London. Two ſuch friends will not, I am ſure, leave any thing unattempted

for

for you; and till we can hear from them, let us firſt endeavour to recover the fatigue of this alarming night, and then to make ourſelves as eaſy as we can."

Marchmont, unwilling to repreſs thoſe ſanguine hopes which he could not imitate, now entreated her to wrap herſelf in her cloak, and reſt her head on his ſhoulder, while his arm ſupported her, in the hope that ſhe might take ſome reſt, of which he could not bear ſhe ſhould be during the whole night deprived.—Althea, deſirous of appeaſing his apprehenſions for her health, affected to ſleep; while Marchmont, the firſt time the tumult of his ſpirits would allow him to do it, began to think over the circumſtances of his ſituation.

Never did an unfortunate priſoner, guiltleſs even of imprudence as he was, look forward to a more hopeleſs proſpect. Though he knew his friends Forreſter and Everſley would give the ſecurity that the baſe and malignant cowardice

cowardice of Mohun had inſiſted upon for his keeping the peace, relying on his honour that they ſhould incur no riſk, yet the debt that had ſo long hung over him, ſwelled as it now was by accumulated intereſt, was ſuch as he could not dream of aſking them to anſwer.—He knew how Everſley was circumſtanced, and how much of his individual fortune had already been advanced in conſequence of his generous friendſhip; the Earl of Stanwarden was not rich; and though Forreſter was the favourite of his family, yet being only a younger brother, and one of a family of five, he had but a ſmall allowance, and had been principally obliged, for any conſiderable ſupplies of money, to an aunt of his mother's:—ſhe had never had a child of her own, and loved him with great affection, living very much within her jointure that ſhe might lay by money for him.—Whatever reſource ſuch a good dowager was to Forreſter himſelf,

it

it did not by any means enable him to aſſiſt a friend to ſuch an extent as was now neceſſary for poor Marchmont.—Other hopes he had none. He himſelf poſſeſſed nothing; and the fortune of Althea, if he had been capable of a wiſh to touch it, was not only inſufficient, but ſo ſecured by his own act before his marriage, that, except the eight hundred pounds that had belonged to Mrs. Trevyllian, and which Althea had herſelf inſiſted on having left at liberty, he could not appropriate a penny of the principal to this or any other purpoſe.

What then was to be his deſtiny?—Impriſonment, perpetual and hopeleſs! "And is this," ſaid he, as he looked earneſtly on Althea, "is this the lot I have induced this lovely, this incomparable creature to ſhare with me?—Is a place of confinement, tears, and lamentation—the abode of ſorrow, guilt, and miſery, the bridal houſe, whither,

after three weeks marriage, I conduct my Althea?"

The fear of disturbing her transient forgetfulness, rather than any effort of fortitude, induced him to stifle the groans that swelled his bursting heart. But as before she awoke it was necessary he should determine on something that might at least look like trying to procure his emancipation, he decided to send Fenchurch, who was to return at noon, to Mr. Bargrave, and desire his advice how to act. So passed this miserable night. At an early hour in the morning Marchmont wrote his letter to Bargrave; and poor Fenchurch, returning soon after with such an account of Mrs. Marchmont as her daughters thought would give their brother as little additional uneasiness as possible (though it was far from the truth), entreated his master to let him go to London with the letter to the lawyer—though, from the excessive fatigue he had undergone,

Marchmont

Marchmont was deſirous of finding ſome other meſſenger.

Such arrangements as could be made for their accommodation were then ſet about. The gaoler, from the large ſum for which Marchmont was in cuſtody, ſuppoſed him to be ſome extravagant young man of faſhion, who would ſpend his money freely; he therefore provided him with a ſmall chamber well ſecured, and a decent woman was appointed to attend on Althea—who now found herſelf releaſed from the apprehenſion that had been the moſt uneaſy to her, that ſhe ſhould be compelled to ſee, if not to mingle among, unfortunate or culpable wretches; among thoſe whoſe calamities ſhe could not relieve, or whoſe real or imputed guilt made them at once objects of abhorrence and pity.—A priſon, however ſhe had miſcalculated its miſeries as affecting her, was ſtill very dreadful. The horrid countenances of the men who

had charge of the keys; the expreſſion of malignant ſatisfaction which they appeared to have on thoſe countenances, when they were empowered to ſecure ſuch a priſoner as Marchmont; and the precautions that were taken before Fenchurch was admitted to ſpeak to his maſter, were circumſtances that all ſerved to depreſs the ſpirits of Althea. But ſhe ſaw how much the fortitude of Marchmont depended on ſeeing her tranquil; and whatever were the pangs that aſſailed her heart on making obſervations on their preſent, or conſidering their future fortune, ſhe aſſumed a ſteady and even a cheerful countenance, and made light of any inconveniences that Marchmont ſeemed to foreſee and to dread for her.

The ſecond day of their ſad abode in this ſcene of confinement brought them a ſtill conſoling account of Mrs. Marchmont; and Lucy, who wrote to her brother, talked of viſiting them on the

the next day but one.—Althea, however, notwithſtanding the generally ſatisfactory purport of this letter, remarked, though ſhe carefully concealed it from her huſband, that the writing was leſs regular than Lucy's uſually was, and the paper, in two or three places, bliſtered with tears. Theſe obſervations impreſſed her with dread, leſt Mrs. Marchmont was ſinking under the heavy blow ſhe had ſuſtained; and ſuch an apprehenſion, both on her own account, and becauſe of the effect it would have on her ſon, was more dreadful to Althea than any other fear that ſhe had yet been compelled ſilently to ſuſtain.

Towards evening Fenchurch returned with a letter from Mr. Bargrave; in which he civilly reproached Marchmont for his imprudence in provoking Mr. Mohun, expreſſed himſelf very ſorry for the general ſtate of his affairs, ſpoke with a ſort of horror of the ſerious miſchief of getting into the hands of the

Chief-Juſtice, and proteſted he knew not how to adviſe. He concluded however with ſaying, that the firſt thing Marchmont had to do, was to move himſelf by habeas corpus to the King's Bench priſon—the neceſſary ſteps for which Bargrave ſaid he had taken, and directed Marchmont what he was himſelf to do. But his whole letter was calculated to diſcourage and depreſs the hopes and ſpirits of his client; nor were they greatly relieved by the following letter, which Fenchurch had found at the Coffee-Houſe in Cecil-Street. It was written in anſwer to Marchmont's letter from thence on the day of his writing to Mohun.

LETTER.

"Penzance, June 27th.

"Your letter, my dear Marchmont, gives me the moſt acute concern I am capable of feeling, and the more ſo be-

cauſe

cauſe I am at this moment ſo circumſtanced, that I cannot haſten to you as I would otherwiſe do; and I am afraid you never wanted more ſuch aſſiſtance as I can give you, though it is far, very far, from being ſuch as my heart would offer were I otherwiſe ſituated. Nothing, my friend, can be more deplorable than *my* ſituation. Were it leſs ſo, I might ſtill be tempted to envy yours; for what are pecuniary difficulties, what are all thoſe evils of life which you have often aſſerted, and I am ſometimes tempted to believe, ariſe from the abuſes of our ſocial contract, compared to the miſeries that ſpring from the irrevocable contract of an ill-aſſorted marriage?

"The unhappy woman, to whom, while hardly yet arrived at the period when the law allows a man a will of his own, I was tied to humour the will of others, is now in ſuch a ſtate, that, while humanity forbids my leaving her, my re-

maining with her is the moſt horrible puniſhment! You know what I ſuffered from the violence, the caprice, the malignity of her temper, when every reaſonable perſon, who ſaw her ſituation in life, thought ſhe had every reaſonable means of content. But the tenderneſs with which I then treated her, far from engaging her gratitude or her affection, ſerved only to accuſtom her to a more unlicenſed indulgence of a dreadful temper, or, to ſpeak more plainly, of a bad heart; for ſuch ſurely muſt be poſſeſſed by a woman who, with the moſt decided reſolution to gratify herſelf, is totally indifferent to the feelings of others.—Brought up to believe money the greateſt good, and being heireſs to the ill-acquired wealth of her father, ſhe ſuppoſed that every creature around her was to be ſubſervient to her. The leaſt oppoſition threw her into agonies of paſſion, and, in proportion as theſe paroxyſms were yielded to, their frequency

quency and fury increaſed. The conſciouſneſs of her being deteſted then came to torment her; and though ſhe would not correct the cauſe, the effect ſhe would not endure. Indulgence in that degrading vice, that in obſcuring the reaſon may tranſiently mitigate the ſufferings of the miſerable, next ſucceeded. Her temper and her blood became equally inflamed, and ſhe lived in the wretched viciſſitudes of rage or ſtupefaction till the ſtate of her health alarmed her; and then, having ſome purpoſe to purſue that related ſolely to herſelf, ſhe ſet forth in ſearch of that health which, with ſuch a diſpoſition, it was impoſſible to find—and hither I accompanied her, determined to fulfil, to my utmoſt, the duty which, having been at firſt impoſed upon me, has never been ſweetened by affection, eſteem, friendſhip, or gratitude. Imbecility of intellect has daily increaſed upon this poor unhappy being, without mitigating the

violence of her diſpoſition. She now throws herſelf into the moſt furious rage, if her maid diſplaces a pin, or if a word is uttered which ſhe does not approve of, though what ſhe likes to-day ſhe abhors to-morrow: then feeling the impotence of her ridiculous anger, and that it hurts nobody ſo much as herſelf, ſhe falls into tears, and bewails her hard fate, and the cruelty of thoſe about her, in terms that would really make a ſtranger, for a moment, believe her the moſt injured and unfortunate of women. I think it is very evident that her mind becomes more and more deranged, but in her perſonal health I ſee no difference; and probably ſhe may remain many years in this wretched ſtate, though the phyſical men who attend her ſeem to think not. Imagine, my dear Marchmont, if you can (but indeed it is not eaſy to figure to yourſelf ſcenes of which you have never beheld any reſemblance)—imagine what muſt be

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the ſtate of my houſehold! what the education, the manners of two girls who have been brought up under ſuch a mother! what the ſort of ſervants are, who alone will ſtay with her! and how much of robbery and inſolence I am compelled to be blind to, leſt ſhe ſhould be deſerted even by theſe mercenary and diſhoneſt creatures!

"Sometimes ſhe declares a reſolution of leaving this place, and returning home, which I moſt heartily wiſh: then ſhe aſſerts her inability to go back to an eſtate which her money has been laid out to improve, but which ſhe knows will be inhabited, at leaſt for my life, by ſome one of the people ſhe hates the moſt; for ſhe is ſure the moment ſhe is dead I ſhall marry again, and preciſely a perſon who will uſe her poor girls very ill, and rob them of all the furniture and good things ſhe has been collecting.

"Such is the converſation I am forced to hear—ſuch is the faint but true ſketch of my miſerable condition, from which I know not how immediately to diſengage myſelf ſoon enough, or long enough, to do you any effectual good by meeting you in town. Let me, however (while I try to accompliſh this), let me entreat you, my dear Marchmont! to be as cool as you can in regard to Mohun; for any unguarded heat, however great the provocation, will only give him an advantage over you. Beware of Vampyre, and of the unadjuſted claims of Meſſrs. Spriggins and Scrapepenny—I have a horror of thoſe uſurious fellows, but ſtill more of the inſtrument they employ. Their anſwers to me were ſo evidently evaſive, and they have both ſo much of Shylock about them, that my daily dread is of their enforcing their bonds. This accurſed perſuaſion haunts me with more uneaſineſs, becauſe my own money matters

ters (the money of my wife I make it, you know, a rule never to touch) are ſo circumſtanced this year by the neceſſity I am under of making the laſt payment of Linda's (I ſhould ſay Mrs. Glaſton's) little fortune, and by the failure of my principal tenant, that I cannot (as I aſſure you, upon my honour, I would otherwiſe do) come up to the demands of theſe extortioners.

"Nevertheleſs, my dear friend, I am by no means ſo ſtraightened, but that I can give you, without the ſlighteſt inconvenience, the encloſed order on my banker for fifty pounds. The ſum is ſmall; but I know you will be better pleaſed to receive ſuch, which will not even remotely diſtreſs me, than a larger that might juſt now have that conſequence. My good friend, when he recollects how little I am likely to aſſert the moſt inconſequential falſehood, will not doubt my ſincerity, when I tell him, that, robbed as I am of every domeſtic comfort,

comfort, I can taſte no pleaſure but what ariſes from the little power that is left me of doing, what yet I can do, for the two people whom I moſt love and eſteem. Write to me immediately, Marchmont, and reſt aſſured of the unfailing friendſhip and affection of your

"W. Eversley."

This letter would have convinced Marchmont, if he had not been well aware of it before, that even if he could have endured the thoughts of owing ſo much to Everſley's friendſhip, which he had long ſince determined never to do, it was not in his power at this time to aſſiſt him.

Marchmont read a part of this letter to Althea, whoſe heart bled to think of the unhappy ſituation of Everſley, for whom ſhe had the moſt perfect eſteem.—She took occaſion, however, to remark to Marchmont, how little the poſſeſſion of

of even a great fortune ſecured happineſs.—"When you feel yourſelf diſpoſed, my dear friend," ſaid ſhe, "from your tenderneſs for me, to lament our preſent ſituation, recollect how much my lot, which indeed I account a happy one, is preferable to what I ſhould have known if I had married the cruel, arrogant, hateful Mohun; or, eſcaping him, if any of the many objectionable men I have ſeen or heard of had received my promiſe to *love*, *honour*, and *obey*. It might have been my deſtiny to have met with the counterpart of Mrs. Everſley; for ſuch a being (I am afraid more than one) there undoubtedly is in the world. Then, he might not only have contrived to have rendered me wretched by the various ways in which ſhe torments her huſband, but, privileged by his ſex, he might have diſſipated my fortune and his own, and poſſibly have beat me, or locked me up, or ſold me if he could have

have met with a purchaſer, to give courſe to his brutal humour, or contribute to his ſelfiſh indulgences. Such people have exiſted—do probably exiſt now; and what would have become of me had I belonged to one? But are not *we* happy, Marchmont, whom fate cannot hurt unleſs it ſeparate us? which ſurely can happen only from death. Yes, my dear love! believe your Althea, when ſhe declares to you, that in this priſon, and without any certainty of quitting it unleſs for another, ſhe feels herſelf a thouſand times happier than ſhe ſhould be in the moſt brilliant circle, bearing about her the value of half a county in jewels, and ſimpering at the ſad repetition of unintereſting converſation among thoſe who are called Great! I ſaw enough of the lives of people of the very firſt world to be thoroughly convinced I did not envy them. To live as we wiſh to live, we want nothing but the juſtice we ſhall ſurely obtain ſooner

or

or later—we ſhall then have a ſmall competence; doubt not but that we ſhall find means to increaſe it. I have often known the idle make themſelves miſerable, merely becauſe they had nothing to do. If, as a celebrated poet ſays, to be employed is to be happy, we ſhall have another chance of eſcaping from all the fancied evils of life at leaſt—if the imaginations of thoſe who are bleſt in each other can indeed be liable to ideal calamities."

Marchmont, while every word of conſolation, uttered by his adored Althea, heightened the tender admiration with which he regarded her, yet could not ſo eaſily reconcile himſelf to ſee in a cheerful light events which had reduced her below her rank; and when he reflected on the machinations of the villanous agent to whom all their preſent miſery, and that he had for ſo many years experienced, were owing, his heart ſwelled with unconquerable rage

and

and indignation: and when he ceaſed to be charmed with the fortitude and ſoothed with the ſweetneſs of Althea, he felt himſelf diſpoſed to curſe the authors of his diſtreſs—himſelf, the univerſe, and all but her and his ſuffering family.

He took, however, in purſuance of Mr. Bargrave's advice, meaſures to remove to the King's Bench, and the ſixth day of his impriſonment was fixed upon for his departure. Lucy, as having the moſt reſolution and the beſt ſpirits, was on that day to come over to ſee her brother. She came—Marchmont was buſy in another room, and Althea was alone when ſhe entered; when, ſtruck with her altered appearance, ſhe eagerly enquired, as ſhe embraced her, whether ſhe was well?—whether her mother and ſiſters were well?

"My brother is not here," anſwered Lucy in a faint voice; "but he is not confined ſeparately from you, is he?—

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He is not ſhut up in the common priſon?"—Althea having ſatisfied her that he was only accidentally abſent, preparing for his removal, Lucy, fetching a deep ſigh, ſaid—"I may then tell you, my deareſt ſiſter, what we muſt conceal from him. Ever ſince the fatal night when he was ſo cruelly torn from us, my mother has been in the moſt alarming ſtate from fainting fits, ſo frequent and ſo long, that we have dreaded leſt every one that has ſeized her ſhould be her laſt. You have no notion, Althea, how ſadly ſhe is altered; Amelia and I have never been in bed for above an hour at a time ſince we ſaw you go; for we dare not leave her a moment, Mr. Wilkinſon thinking her in great danger. Alas! what ſhall we do?—What will become of us?"

Althea, trembling at this cruel report, and dreading the effect it would have on Marchmont, was hardly able to ſay—"For God's ſake, my Lucy, have ſome other

other advice—let ſomething elſe be done; let ſome phyſician be ſent for inſtantly!"

Lucy then told her, in a hurried way, "that Mr. Wilkinſon had himſelf propoſed it on the ſecond day of his attendance; but that her mother had relapſed on the mention of it, and had ſince made them promiſe they would not engage any phyſician to come—'They can do me no good,' ſaid ſhe; 'it is too late. Did you ever hear that a phyſician could cure a broken heart? No, my dear girls, my complaints are out of the reach of medicine: the only cordial would be the ſight of your brother and Althea—your brother at liberty, and unoppreſſed—and that I ſhall never ſee. No; I ſhall never, never behold my ſon again!'—This (continued Lucy) is the ſtyle in which ſhe talks. But, alas! I knew how fruitleſs would be my applications for my brother to go to her; and I thought it beſt to conceal from him

him intelligence that I knew he could not have ſupported."

Althea, whoſe preſence of mind never forſook her in the cauſe of thoſe ſhe loved, then told Lucy, that the only thing to be done was to remove Mrs. Marchmont to London, if ſhe were able to bear the journey—"I will ſecure her ſome lodging near the place where our poor Armyn is to be confined," ſaid ſhe, "and take care that advice ſhall be ready the moment ſhe gets thither. Do you and Amelia in the mean-time, my dear Lucy, exert yourſelves to ſupport her; aſſure her this arrangement is made at the expreſs deſire of her ſon, who can there ſee her—I will return to-morrow to aſſiſt in taking care of her to town the day after. My coming will convince her it is Marchmont's wiſh; and when ſhe is aſſured ſhe ſhall ſee him, ſhe will acquire ſtrength to undertake the fatigue. Settle every

every thing, in the mean-time, ſo that ſhe may have as little trouble as poſſible, and expect me to-morrow night."

Lucy would have expreſſed her fears, leſt ſo much fatigue and anxiety ſhould affect Althea herſelf; but Marchmont at that moment coming in, Althea checked her, and the buſtle of their departure prevented Marchmont's noticing, as he would otherwiſe have done, the ill-concealed anguiſh of his ſiſter.—They parted—Lucy for her ſad home, and Marchmont and Althea, guarded by ſeveral retainers of the law, for the King's Bench priſon, where Fenchurch had, with great difficulty, and at a very high price, ſecured them a room.—Marchmont had now to undergo the diſagreeable ceremony of being ſurrendered to the Marſhal of the priſon, and of ſeeing the precautions uſed to ſecure a perſon taken for ſuch a ſum.—He had beſides ſo many fees to pay, and

ſo

ſo many cuſtoms to ſatisfy, that, on examining his purſe, he found it reduced within ten guineas. The diſpoſition in which he betook himſelf to his bed may eaſily be imagined.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Sorrow ſeems pleaſed to dwell with ſo much ſweetneſs!

ALTHEA, anxious for the ſad group ſhe had left, and not knowing how to diſcloſe to Marchmont the truth of their ſituation, was unable to ſleep—yet ſhe concealed her real feelings with admirable fortitude; and Marchmont, believing her compoſed, and wearied as he was by the haraſſing events of the preceding day, ſunk to repoſe. Such a tranſient relief was neceſſary to enable him to bear, with ſome degree of firmneſs, the communication which early the next morning Althea was compelled to

to make, in order to account for a journey which ſhe knew nothing on earth but conſideration for his mother would induce him to conſent to. Though ſhe ſoftened the cruel truth as much as ſhe could, it was impoſſible to prevent Marchmont from believing the worſt; and as he agreed with Althea in thinking, if ſhe was able to be removed, it would be better, both on account of advice as well as to be near them, that his mother and ſiſters ſhould remove, he conſented that Althea, attended by Fenchurch, ſhould ſet out to aſſiſt the poor girls in their arduous taſk, while he endeavoured by means of one of the runners of the priſon to ſecure them as comfortable a lodging as could be found within the rules; where he hoped he could ſee his mother, and alleviate ſome part of the anguiſh which his impriſonment inflicted.

Althea was to take leave of him then till the next day, which was the very

earlieſt ſhe could poſſibly return, though he entreated her moſt earneſtly, in the pious commiſſion ſhe had undertaken, not to be careleſs of her own health, on which more than his exiſtence depended. Theſe charges being given, and Fenchurch ſtrictly enjoined never to loſe ſight of the chaiſe that held his miſtreſs, Marchmont took her arm within his to conduct her to the chaiſe that was waiting for her. It was now that for the firſt time Althea formed an idea of the place, where her ſinking heart told her Marchmont might too probably paſs many of his days. At that early hour of the morning the moſt wretched and deſtitute inhabitants of this encloſure were juſt iſſuing from the ſad places where they had paſſed the night.—Squalid from poverty and confinement, languid deſpair was in the countenances of ſome, while others expreſſed that ſort of unfeeling indifference that ariſes from deſperation worn down to apathy. The evening before, Althea,

thea, attentive only to Marchmont, and knowing that whitherſoever he was going ſhe was to remain with him, had heeded leſs the places ſhe had paſſed through, and the people that ſurrounded her in them; but now the grim and fierce-looking men who filled the room called the lobby, the great keys they bore, and the precautions which were taken to let only one perſon at a time paſs from that place to or from the priſon, and the ſuſpicion which two of them who followed cloſe to Marchmont expreſſed, all ſerved to fill her with dread. Marchmont having ſpoken to one of them, and given him a ſhilling, deſired he might go to the door to ſee his wife into a chaiſe. The man was going to comply with this, when another of apparently more authority ſtepped forward, and, putting himſelf immediately before Marchmont, ſaid, "Sir, we've pertickler orders about you—I can't allow of your going down the ſteps."

Marchmont felt *that* to be the bitterest moment he had yet passed—but making an effort to conquer himself, that he might not alarm Althea, he replied, calmly, "Well, then, do you come with me *to* the door, that I may see the lady get in." Three or four of them immediately surrounded him as he advanced towards and stood at the prison door, while Althea, who trembled as she bade him adieu, stepped into the chaise, which was immediately driven away. The moment she was out of Marchmont's sight, all her fortitude forsook her, and she burst into an agony of tears. The exertion she had made had been long and painful, and now that the appearance of calmness was no longer necessary, she gave way to the anguish that might otherwise have had fatal consequences.

As she proceeded, however, the freshness of the air insensibly recovered her. It was now the end of June, and a summer

mer ſhower that had fallen at day-break had given to every blade and leaf new verdure and ſweetneſs. But when Althea, taking her handkerchief from her eyes, beheld the beauties which nature every where offers at this ſeaſon, the image of the poor priſoner ſhe had juſt left, who might never again enjoy them, aroſe to her; and again her heart ſwollen with anguiſh felt as if it would break, till another burſt of tears relieved her.

When, however, ſhe arrived at the firſt ſtage, the concern expreſſed in the countenance of poor Fenchurch, as he waited on her into the houſe, recalled her to ſome degree of reſolution. She endeavoured to reaſon herſelf into more apparent compoſure, and, before ſhe arrived at the place where the chaiſe was to be changed a ſecond time, had in a certain degree ſucceeded.

Marchmont, in the mean time, who felt himſelf completely wretched in ſubmitting to even this tranſient ſeparation,

ſhut himſelf up in his room, where he expected, in conſequence of a letter he had diſpatched, that Mr. Bargrave would have come to him to conſult upon what ſhould be done. But the morning paſſed away, and he did not appear. Marchmont ſat down without appetite to his dinner; and hardly ſwallowing enough to ſatisfy nature, he felt a melancholy ſatisfaction in beſtowing the reſt on a poor man and woman, who had undertaken to do any little offices for him in the abſence of his ſervant, neceſſarily ſhut out of a night. Theſe unhappy people, with two children, inhabited a room in the ſame paſſage, and oppoſite to that where Marchmont was ſituated. But even this place, not above twelve feet long, and eight wide, was the bed-room of two other poor debtors, who paid ſo much a week for ſharing it. And during the day it ſerved as a kitchen, when its proprietors could get food; and always as a laundry, for the

woman took in washing for the prisoners. Marchmont, after his dinner, entered for a moment into this abode of poverty and wretchedness, and was at once shocked and gratified at beholding the eagerness with which this half-famished group ate of what he had given them. He withdrew, however, not to interrupt them, bidding the man come to him when he had finished his meal.

"Good God!" exclaimed Marchmont, as he re-considered the scene to which he had been witness; "is it possible that for a small sum, such as it is likely such people as these can owe, their creditor has a right to shut them up from the common air, and use of their limbs, by which alone there can remain any chance of their payment? Can laws that suffer and enforce this senseless cruelty, be the very best that the wisdom and experience of mankind can devise for the government of civil society? These reflections were resumed

with yet more force when the poor man, whose name was Benſted, related his ſad yet common hiſtory — "I am a Staffordſhire man, Sir," ſaid he, "and was brought up a working cutler. Since the war not having employ at Birmingham where I worked, I was adviſed by a relation of mine to come to London, and ſet up ſhop for myſelf; and though I had only been a journeyman, yet my Peggy being a pretty good manager, and our girl and boy got a little out of the way, we had ſcraped up a ſmall matter to begin with; and our couſin, an old bachelor, ſaid he would lend us thirty pound to help: ſo we took a houſe up here at London, and our couſin came to board with us. However, he paid us nothing, by reaſon of the money he had lent us, which was to be paid him again this way, as he ſaid, and as I thought— though there was no writing between us, except my note that I gave him for the thirty pound. Trade indeed was but dull,

dull, and I was almoſt ſorry I had ever come to London; but, however, the thing was done, and I thought this couſin of ours, who had to be ſure begun ſo friendly, would leave to my two young ones all he had. He had always charity and ſuch-like in his mouth, and uſed to go twice a day to meeting, and made my children go along with him, and my wife too very often—indeed, oftener to my thinking than was good for our buſineſs and management at home. All of a ſudden we heard out of Staffordſhire that a farmering man, who was the ſame relation to my wife as he was to this couſin of hers, had died without a will, and left a freehold of about fifty pound a year behind him. Mr. Drape declared he was the next heir, and away he went to take poſſeſſion; and I, for my part, ſhould have let him have kept it, if a lawyer's clerk, who came juſt before to lodge at our houſe, had not, when we were talking about it one day, told me,

that it was my wife and not Drape that the eſtate belonged to; and to be ſure he made it out as plain as could be—ſo he got counſel's opinion upon it, and that was for us too, and to law we went. After two years and a half the cauſe was decided—and it was, that we were to divide the property. But the coſts of the law-ſuit came to forty pounds more than our half ſold for, and Mr. Drape arreſted me for the thirty pounds he had lent me. So here I am, with expences and all, confined for above an hundred pounds, and am not worth an hundred pence in the world! But then, Sir, there's half the people here in juſt the ſame caſe—ſo it is not for me to repine! As to myſelf, I am uſed to it now and could bear it; but it is very heart-breaking to me to have my boy and girl brought up in ſuch a place. It muſt be their ruin, to be ſure! My girl is now almoſt thirteen, and what a bad thing for her to run about here!—But there's

there's no help for it! we have no friends!"

The generous heart of Marchmont felt for this poor fellow, and the more ſo, as effectually to relieve him was not in his power. Having, however, aſſured him of ſuch temporary aſſiſtance as he could give, he returned to the contemplation of his own ſorrows—while general uneaſineſs was not unmixed with wonder that Mr. Bargrave never appeared. He learned, however, the next day, in converſation with one of his fellow priſoners, that ſolicitors of a certain degree of reputation did not often chooſe to viſit their clients in priſon; that there was ſome ſort of diſcredit annexed to it; and that many perſons there had been compelled to have recourſe to men of the profeſſion who practiſed in the neighbourhood. This converſation ended in a propoſal on the part of the ſtranger to introduce Marchmont to one of theſe practitioners;

ers; but ſuch was his dread of the fraternity, that he declined, at leaſt for the preſent, any experiment of that ſort; and, returning to his room, wrote again to Bargrave, though as he did it he enquired of himſelf *Cui bono*? too certain that, even if his ſolicitor entered with all poſſible zeal into the cauſe, little could be done to relieve him from his preſent cruel ſituation. But had himſelf alone been in queſtion, he would have gone with tranquillity to his bed. It was the thoughts of Althea, of his mother and his ſiſters, that ſtrewed his pillow with thorns, and drove all repoſe from him, as he ſadly reflected on the juſtice of the Spaniſh proverb—"*If a man ſleep too much, let him borrow the pillow of a debtor.*"

The morning of the day after Althea's departure was paſſed, however heavily, yet without any other actual uneaſineſs than her abſence, and the dread of what he might hear on her return, neceſſarily occaſioned.

occaſioned.—But the time ſoon came when he might expect her, and then his anxiety became almoſt inſupportable. Eagerly watching every body that entered, he continued to walk backwards and forwards before the inner door of the priſon—but the hours wore away, evening was approaching, and Althea came not. The bell rang to announce that all ſtrangers within the walls muſt depart, which is always done a ſhort time before the doors are cloſed for the night. Marchmont, therefore, knowing how ſoon that muſt now happen, and that Althea would be ſhut out, was made half frantic by the apprehenſion, and haſtened into the lobby to gain over, if poſſible, one of the keepers to favour her, ſhould ſhe arrive too late for the regular hour of admittance: but the man to whom he had been uſed to ſpeak, and whoſe good-will he had ſecured by the preſent of a guinea on his entrance, was not now waiting there. The place

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ſeemed to be in confuſion, and Marchmont heard that a priſoner in execution for twelve hundred pounds had juſt before very nearly effected his eſcape: a circumſtance which redoubled the vigilance of the keepers, who, when Marchmont ſucceeded in making his requeſt known, anſwered him with more than uſual brutality, that the thing he aſked was impoſſible; and that they deſired he would not again come into the lobby. In an agony of mind little ſhort of deſperation Marchmont then remonſtrated. It was in vain, and only ſerved to draw upon him accumulated inſults, which he could neither eſcape from nor puniſh. With four or five other perſons he was puſhed back into the area of the priſon, and, as if on purpoſe to diſtract him, the doors were inſtantly ſhut—ſome minutes before the uſual time. The moſt cruel apprehenſions now took poſſeſſion of his mind. Either his mother was dangerouſly ill, perhaps dead; or

Althea

Althea returning would not be admitted; and as ſhe had not one acquaintance in London, or any place to go to, what would become of her? whither could ſhe reſort for protection? Severe as were his fears for his mother, this apprehenſion, which ſeemed the moſt probable, was alſo the moſt intolerable; and it is difficult to ſay what ſtate of mind Marchmont might have been in before morning, if, in reconſidering every circumſtance, he had not recollected that Fenchurch, who was active and intelligent, was with her; and as he knew the lodging that had been ſecured in the morning for Mrs. Marchmont, it was poſſible, and he hoped probable, that the man might have the preſence of mind to conduct his miſtreſs thither.

This ſuppoſition a little mitigated, though it could by no means appeaſe the fears that tormented him during the night. At the break of day he was on foot, and, the inſtant the doors were open,

open, ſent a runner to the lodgings engaged for his mother—though without much hope, for he concluded Fenchurch would have been with him at the firſt moment of admittance, had they been ſo near. The man preſently came back to ſay none of the family were there!

A thouſand tormenting conjectures now again aſſailed the unhappy priſoner. His mother muſt, he thought, be dying; for ſome ſuch urgent cauſe could alone have detained his wife.—Yet then ſurely Fenchurch would have been ſent to releaſe him from conjectures ſo painful, even though it were neceſſary to reveal ſome cruel truth, ſince the truth muſt at laſt be known.

As this ſecond day of dreadful ſuſpenſe paſſed away, the agitation of his mind became more and more intolerable, and he thought every diſtreſs he had yet experienced, light in compariſon of the tortures he now underwent. Having no intimate friend in London to whom he

he could ſend, and as he had purpoſely avoided making any acquaintance where he was, he had nobody either to hear his diſtracting apprehenſions, or to counſel him how to act. To the mercenaries of the place he applied: ſent one to one place, another to another, with enquiries —all returned without any information; while Marchmont, who ſince the departure of Althea had taken neither food nor reſt, walked about feveriſh from the troubled ſtate of his mind, but giving not the leaſt attention either to his perſonal feelings, or to the people round him. They of courſe conſidered him, from the agitated ſtate he appeared in, as a poor wretch whoſe condition was more deplorable than their own, inaſmuch as he ſeemed to be devoid of either the fortitude or the indifference that might have enabled him to ſupport it as they did.

At length Marchmont beheld near the door a female figure, which he thought

thought reſembled Althea. He approached with eagerneſs.—It was indeed herſelf, but ſo pale, ſo faint, that every other fear was for a moment forgotten in the more dreadful one of trembling for her ſafety. She took Marchmont's arm, but appeared unequal to anſwering at that moment the queſtions he eagerly put to her. Aſſuring him, however, that ſhe was not ill, ſhe attempted to appeaſe his terrors; but her own returned upon her with a force ſo irreſiſtible, that in deſpite of all her efforts ſhe burſt into tears.

"Good God!" exclaimed Marchmont, "my mother is dead! I am ſure of it, Althea—Do not, therefore, attempt to diſguiſe the truth from me. Alas! it is better I ſhould know it at once. She is dead—I ſhall never ſee her more."

Althea now found ſtrength to ſpeak—"No, dear Marchmont," ſaid ſhe, "ſhe is not dead, and you will, I truſt, ſee her

her again; but I dare not flatter you that it is likely ſhe will long live. Since the ſhock ſhe received on the night of your arreſt, ſhe has been in a moſt dangerous ſtate.—If the fainting fits into which ſhe falls, give her a tranſient reſpite, ſhe no ſooner recovers a little ſtrength than ſhe inſiſts on ſeeing you; imagines ſometimes that ſhe is pleading to Vampyre for your releaſe; at others, that ſhe is herſelf arreſted by him, and ſees you in chains attempting to releaſe her: then ſhrieks and convulſive groans exhauſt her, till the long fits of fainting return. Notwithſtanding all this, my dear friend, we have brought her to London, though not without ſome difficulty I own, and many terrors. I could not immediately leave her on our arrival, but the moment I could get away I haſtened hither."

"And now," ſaid Marchmont, "you are yourſelf ill.—I am ſure of it by your countenance and manner. Wretch that I am!

I am! it is I who am deſtined to be the death of all I love!" He then walked about for a moment, while Althea, ſummoning all her fortitude, aſſured him that ſhe was no otherwiſe ill than from fatigue and anxiety, and that a little reſt, if ſhe could once ſee him tolerably calm, would reſtore her. Marchmont then, fearing to aggravate her ſufferings by yielding to his own, ſent Benſted for ſome refreſhment for her—(Fenchurch was not yet come)—and implored her before ſhe thought of any thing elſe to endeavour to tranquillize her ſpirits and recover her ſtrength.

Althea, who thought little of herſelf where the ſervice of thoſe ſhe loved was in queſtion, ſoon affected to overcome the accidental indiſpoſition ſhe had felt on her arrival, and declared herſelf ready and anxious to go with him to his mother, for whom, ſhe ſaid, the ſight of him would do more than any cordial. Fenchurch, who juſt then arrived,

ſpoke

ſpoke rather favourably of her ſituation; and he was now diſpatched to the Marſhal to aſk leave for Mr. Marchmont, attended by one or two men, or under any reſtrictions named, to be permitted to ſee his mother, only for half an hour, at her abode within the rules.—All the miſery and humiliation of being compelled to *aſk* this permiſſion ſtruck heavily on the heart of Marchmont: his condition of mind therefore may be imagined, when Fenchurch, breathleſs himſelf with rage, returned with a poſitive refuſal.—"Tell your maſter," ſaid the Marſhal, "that though I have ſometimes granted this indulgence, I cannot do it now with any regard to my own ſafety; and that I have beſides a ſtrict charge from Mr. Vampyre, by which I ſhould make myſelf more than ordinarily liable, if any thing happened. I'm ſorry it is ſo, but it is not my fault—I cannot help it."

It ſeemed as if Marchmont at this moment felt, for the firſt time, all the diſgrace and horrors of impriſonment; his blood ſeemed to undergo a revulſion, and then to preſs back on his heart in a torrent that deprived him of breath. He felt for a moment diſpoſed to daſh himſelf againſt the wall, to tear his hair, to commit ſome of thoſe wild and uſeleſs acts of deſperation which intolerable and ſudden anguiſh excites: but he caſt his eyes on Althea, who, pale as aſhes, ſat like the figure of patient pity before him, and his fury for a moment ſubſided: he burſt into a paſſion of tears, and, throwing himſelf into a chair, had only power to exclaim—"My mother! my poor mother! She is dying, and I am not to ſee her; ſhe calls for me to cloſe her eyes, and they hold me from her."—At that cruel image he relapſed into fury, exclaiming—"The villains! the infamous villains! the hard-

hearted

hearted inexorable ſcoundrels!—And ſhall I bear it patiently, chained like a felon—like a galley-ſlave? Let me go," cried he to Fenchurch, who, imploring him to be patient, endeavoured to detain him.—"Unhand me, Fenchurch—dare to prevent me at your peril. No, no; follow me to the vile inſtrument of tyranny that has the injuſtice, the barbarity to confine me; at ſuch a moment to confine me! I will compel his conſent, or tear it from his iron heart. In this country of freedom there can be no law on his ſide.—Heaven, and earth, and hell ſhall hear me!"

Breathleſs and exhauſted, he pauſed; and it was fortunate he did, for it gave Althea time to ſpeak to him: ſhe laid her hand gently on his ſhoulder, but uttered only "Marchmont!" Her voice ſeemed to act on his inflamed paſſions like a charm. He gazed at her a moment, threw his arms round her, and again fell into an agony of tears. She led

led him to a chair, and, bidding Fenchurch wait without the door, ſat ſilently by him, ſupporting his throbbing temples on her breaſt; on which his ſcalding tears fell in ſhowers. Then, after a moment, ſhe ſaid—"Marchmont, is it thus you ſet me an example of fortitude? Is it thus you expreſs your tenderneſs for me? Ah! my dear friend, be aſſured, if you perſiſt in yielding to ſuch ſtarts of paſſion, you will not regain your mother, and certainly you will deſtroy your wife."

"Angel of heaven!" exclaimed Marchmont, "beſt and lovelieſt of beings! forgive me—I cannot, I ought not to forgive myſelf, if I have cauſed one additional pang to this dear boſom, ſo conſoling, ſo ſoothing to me."——A deep ſigh ſucceeded, and for a while he ſeemed unable to utter more. Althea took advantage of his ſilence to repreſent to him, that true tenderneſs was leſs ſhewn by lamenting the ſufferings of

thoſe

thoſe we love, than in attempting their mitigation.—"Your mother, my dear love," ſaid ſhe, "is not, I truſt, in ſo deſperate a ſtate as your fears have repreſented her—perhaps not ſo bad as my report has deſcribed her, for I am naturally a coward about ſickneſs, and have no experience in its changes. But admitting, my beloved friend, that ſhe is even worſe than our love and our dread have made us believe—recollect a moment, how much all her ſufferings would be aggravated, were it poſſible ſhe could know the convulſed ſtate of your mind, and that you endanger your perſonal health, and, perhaps, ſafety; for recollect what you told me, that a man was thruſt into ſome dungeon for having threatened one of the keepers."—Marchmont could only ſigh out that he would be more calm, and Althea proceeded:

"Though you are at this moment unhappily prevented attending the ſick-

bed of this dear mother, I am not——. I will go back and aſſiſt Amelia and Lucy in watching her. I hope to find with them the humane and excellent phyſician who attended my aunt, and whoſe goodneſs and ſkill I ſhall never forget. I diſpatched a note to him the inſtant of our arrival in London, and I cannot but flatter myſelf that he has not forgotten me, and, however far it is from his tour of daily practice, will come as ſoon as he knows the circumſtance, which I have briefly explained to him. Now, Marchmont, conſider how I can venture to preſent myſelf before your mother; how I can anſwer her queſtions, if I leave you in this ſtate of mind. The anguiſh I ſhall bear about me it will be impoſſible for me to diſguiſe; and the conſequence will be, that, believing ſome dreadful circumſtance prevents your being with her, inſtead of an objection which I am ſure we may find means to remove, her terrors, and,

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of courſe, her bodily ſufferings, will be increaſed."

Marchmont, convinced of the juſtice of what ſhe ſaid, and aſhamed of having added to the diſtreſs of his admirable Althea by a momentary loſs of fortitude, aſſured her he would be calm, and ſoon regained as much firmneſs of mind as enabled him to ſee her depart with courage: but the inſtant he had again loſt ſight of her, he relapſed into a ſtate of mind too terrible to be long ſuſtained. Unfit to be ſeen among the motley multitude, he ran to hide himſelf in his own room; but there his anxiety denied him repoſe, and he again deſcended to traverſe the area, and watch the intelligence of which he dreaded the arrival.

In the mean time Althea, attended by Fenchurch, returned with trembling ſteps to the lodging, where ſhe dared not appear before Mrs. Marchmont till ſhe had concerted with Amelia and

Lucy what it would be beſt to ſay to their mother to account for the non-appearance of their brother, which they had all hoped would remove the cruel apprehenſions they laboured under.—Amelia, wholly depreſſed by this additional blow, had no advice to offer; but Lucy, more fertile in expedients, thought that it would be better to relate the truth, and ſay what Althea had told her was true alſo; that the Marſhal, or ſome other perſon, his repreſentative, to whom Fenchurch had applied, had ſaid, on a ſecond remonſtrance from him, that if Mr. Marchmont would find any friend to be bound for his re-appearance in the full ſum and penalties for which he was detained, he might then, with an attendant, be ſuffered to go to the place he requeſted. Lucy hoped, that by aſſuring her mother Mr. Everſley was ſoon expected, who in a matter where the ſecurity for his ſafety was Marchmont's honour, would, ſhe knew,

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anſwer for him to any amount, ſhe might appeaſe her ſuffering mother with hope, which, perhaps, a few days might realize, and by which they might at leaſt gain time to try what could be done.

They haſtened then to adopt this plan; Althea, by an effort of exalted heroiſm, appearing undoubting, and even cheerful. Mrs. Marchmont, on whom her looks had a forcible effect, bore the intelligence of delay, thus ſoftened, better than they had expected. She ſeemed to have ſuffered leſs than they had feared from the fatigue of her journey, and to be conſoled by the idea of being within leſs than a quarter of a mile of Marchmont. This mitigation of actual ſuffering was principally the good work of Althea, and ſhe was amply and inſtantly rewarded by reflecting on the comfort ſhe ſhould afford her huſband when ſhe returned to him.

To return ſhe of courſe became impatient; but ſhe ſtill hoped that her me-

dical friend, however late, would find a quarter of an hour to gratify her with his advice—and as he was a ſtranger to the reſt of the family, ſhe determined to wait for him till the laſt moment.

Having diſpatched Fenchurch with a note to Marchmont, accounting for her ſtay, Althea ſat by the bed-ſide of her mother, while Amelia, Lucy, and Milly buſied themſelves in putting their clothes into drawers, and giving what order and neatneſs they could to an abode which it was moſt likely they were long to inhabit.

It was ſeven o'clock before Dr. Warrington arrived. Earneſtly as Althea had wiſhed to ſee him, ſhe received him with confuſion; and though ſhe had briefly ſtated to him in her letter for whom ſhe wiſhed his aſſiſtance, and the relationſhip in which this friend of hers ſtood to her, ſhe had need of all her preſence of mind to give verbally a more diſtinct account of her preſent ſituation, to one who had laſt ſeen her in circumſtances ſo different.

Dr.

Dr. Warrington, who to the greateſt profeſſional ſkill added an uncommon goodneſs of heart and ſenſibility, underſtood at once the cauſe of her embarraſſment; and while he was concerned that ſhe had made an imprudent marriage, he haſtened to convince her that the regard he had conceived for her, while he ſaw her in attendance upon her aunt, was not to be ſhaken by mere change of fortune. He therefore ſpoke to her with the moſt fatherly tenderneſs; told her how pleaſed he was at her recollecting him on this occaſion; and, having ſucceeded in re-aſſuring her, followed her to the chamber of the patient.

Althea, while he was making the uſual enquiries of Mrs. Marchmont, anxiouſly watched his countenance, and thought ſhe ſaw in it a confirmation of all ſhe dreaded. When his viſit was over, Althea followed him into a parlour, where he deſired pen and ink might be brought; but, before he began to uſe them, he

told Althea ſhe muſt ſit down and compoſe herſelf—"We will have a little converſation together, my fair young friend," ſaid he; "I am ſure that with all the trembling ſenſibility that I ſee in your face, and know to be in your boſom, you have ſenſe and fortitude above your appearance; I make, therefore, no ſcruple to tell you the truth. The diſorder of the poor lady above ſtairs is beyond the reach of medical aid; ſhe is truly and literally dying of a broken heart."

Althea's countenance expreſſed what ſhe had no power to utter.—Dr. Warrington ſaw how much ſhe was hurt, and haſtened to ſay, "But I do not, however, mean decidedly to pronounce, that though a phyſician cannot cure her, ſhe is paſt all cure: on the contrary, if the dreadful preſſure could be removed from her mind, I believe ſhe is not ſo far gone but that ſhe might recover. I am now intereſted for her, for her own ſake as well as for yours; and one cannot

not ſee without deep concern thoſe three lovely young women, to whoſe defenceleſs ſtate I ſuppoſe her life to be ſo neceſſary. Tell me ingenuouſly the condition of your huſband's affairs. For what and by whom is he impriſoned? What are his hopes and his reſources?"

Althea, charmed with the benevolent intereſt this excellent man took in their deſtiny, related as briefly as ſhe could the hiſtory of her firſt acquaintance with Marchmont (but without naming the perſon on whoſe account ſhe had been ſent to Eaſtwoodleigh): on the family, and the cauſes of its decline, ſhe enlarged more fully, particularly on the nature of the engagement that had cauſed him to be impriſoned. She ſpoke particularly of the refuſal of Mohun and Lady Dacres to pay her fortune, and of the cruel and malignant conduct of them both, but eſpecially of the former, who had provoked Marchmont by unworthy treatment, and then taken ſo baſe an

advantage of the anger ſuch treatment could not fail to excite. She concluded by ſtating the amount of the whole ſums for which Marchmont was in cuſtody, and the refuſal of the keeper of the priſon to let him, unleſs with ſureties, viſit his mother."

Althea, mild and calm as ſhe was, was ſo certain that nobody could hear a detail of ſuch injuſtice without indignation, that ſhe wondered the Doctor liſtened to her with ſo ſteady a countenance; expecting that, entering into her feelings, he would have expreſſed his deteſtation of Mohun almoſt as warmly as ſhe felt it. She was, therefore, half repulſed when he ſaid, "I know Mr. Mohun very well, and have attended him. He is a violent and poſitive man, but I ſhould hardly have thought him capable of acting ſo diſhonourably.—Perhaps he has been irritated by ſome falſehood, or by the arts of that attorney. I think, if matters could be explained,

plained, or ſoftened, this complaint of his would be withdrawn, and then it might be ſeen what could be done about the reſt. I am afraid," added he, pauſing, "that at this time of year Mr. Mohun is not in London. However, I will enquire at his houſe, and find out where he is, and you may depend upon my trying what is to be done, and that directly; for indeed the nervous cordial I am going to order for the ſuffering lady above will be utterly uſeleſs, unleſs her ſon's proſpects clear up a little." He then ſat down to write the preſcription; which done, he called for his carriage: and ſeeing Althea about to preſent a fee, while ſhe murmured ſomething of the trouble he had taken in coming ſo far, he ſtopped, and ſaid, "I will once for all tell you, my dear young friend, how I expect to be made amends: put your money in your pocket—I ſhall take none of it. The only way you can gratify me is by letting me ſee I do good

to a perſon of whom I think ſo well as I do of you. I had a ſincere friendſhip for Mrs. Trevyllian—a more excellent woman never exiſted; her memory will always be dear to me, and thoſe ſhe loved it will always be a pleaſure to me to befriend. I am not a man of many profeſſions, you know; and very likely in the preſent caſe very little may be in my power; but what I *can* do, I will—Do you keep up your ſpirits, and conſider how many miſeries there are in the world, infinitely leſs ſupportable than thoſe you now ſhare, bad as they are." He then promiſed to let her know what he had done, if he could not ſee her the following day, and aſſured her he would at all events viſit Mrs. Marchmont again whenever ſhe ſent for him—but that for the preſent nothing could be done but to follow his preſcription, and to keep her as calm and as much in hope as he could.

Dr.

Dr. Warrington then departed, and Althea, with a lighter heart than ſhe had felt ſince the evening of Marchmont's arreſt, went firſt to his mother, whom ſhe left conſiderably better in ſpirits from the doctor's viſit, and then haſtened to her poor priſoner, who waited for her in the ſevereſt ſuſpenſe. To him ſhe appeared indeed a guardian angel: fraud and falſehood ſeemed to loſe their power before the firm purity of her character — like Ithuriel, he thought ſhe could baffle the fiend Vampyre himſelf, and at the ſound of her ſweet voice malignity and rancour and avarice muſt, he believed, be put to flight.

Soothed by theſe ſweet illuſions, and relieved by ſuppoſing his mother better, together with the certainty of her now having the beſt medical advice that could be obtained, Marchmont taſted this night repoſe to which he had long been a ſtranger. The next day rather ſtrengthened

ened his fortitude and his hopes. He received a letter from Everſley, who told him he had written to Mr. Bargrave, giving him the fulleſt powers to make uſe of his credit to any amount within the compaſs of his fortune; and aſſuring him that nothing but the ſituation of Mrs. Everſley, which, though not likely to take any decided turn, rendered it impoſſible for him to leave her, ſhould for a moment prevent his haſtening to London himſelf. So friendly a letter, and the diſpoſition of Dr. Warrington to aſſiſt them, offered more conſoling proſpects than Marchmont had dared to look for; and as the exceſſive agitation of his mind ſubſided, the reſignation and fortitude which he had found it eaſy to talk of to others, but not always poſſible to practiſe himſelf, was again reſtored.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

. . . . . Yield not thy neck
To Fortune's yoke; but let thy dauntleſs mind
Still ride in triumph over all miſchance.

MR. Bargrave now appeared, and excuſed himſelf as well as he could for not having attended Marchmont's firſt ſummons. He had been out of town on indiſpenſable buſineſs, and wiſhed to hear from Mr. Everſley before he took any material ſteps. He then talked over the affairs, but not very ſanguinely. As to what Mr. Everſley had ſaid in his letter, to what did it amount? For, in ſhort, what could be done unleſs to give bai.

bail for the whole debt? Such was the tenor of Mr. Bargrave's converſation: and Marchmont acknowledged, that, as far as related to Everſley, his way of ſeeing the thing accorded with his own opinion; for he would not for the world have engaged Everſley to anſwer for ſo large a ſum, which he ſaw no proſpect of ever being able to pay himſelf. So ſcrupulous was he of intruding too much on his generous friendſhip, that he had made no uſe of the order on his banker which Everſley had laſt ſent him; though ſuch had been the plunder he had ſuffered, and ſuch the high prices at which every thing was retailed in the priſon, that his purſe was very much reduced—while that which Lucy managed for her mother was, from having paid half a year's rent of their cottage, and the expences of their removal, greatly lowered alſo. Nothing was due to Althea of the dividend on her aunt's legacy till October; and Marchmont, when Bargrave

grave had left him, after giving him ſo remote a proſpect of being *out* of impriſonment, began to conſider how he was to live *in it*.

The ſpeculation was melancholy enough. One only reſource was offered by what he could do for himſelf, and that lay in his literary talents; but if theſe afforded him but ſcanty advantages while he enjoyed liberty and ſome degree of conſideration in the world, what could he hope to derive from them now that he had not opportunities to mark the manners, or adapt his writings to the taſte, of the paſſing day. Or, if he took any line in which that knowledge was not neceſſary, he knew how readily, not only bookſellers, but all men in trade regulate their offers of purchaſe by the neceſſities of the ſellers. There was little hope, therefore, that he ſhould find his labour rewarded as if he had been in happier circumſtances. It was beſides very probable,

bable, that the principal dealers in literary traffic would heſitate at purchaſing the work of a priſoner who was likely, beſides the diſgrace of the connection, to vent in his writing ſome part of the diſcontent that impriſonment is very apt to engender.—The paſſage from diſcontent to murmurs againſt the oppreſſion, real or imaginary, is very ſhort; and murmurs may ſavour of ſeditious notions, and ſeditious notions might carry a man nobody knew whither. What rich and ſubſtantial vender would hazard any thing like this in theſe times? Marchmont, in conſidering this over, was aware that purchaſers might ſtill be found; but from ſome his pride recoiled, and from others his prudence. He knew how much the ſucceſs of a book depends on the manner in which it is uſhered into public; and that the mere name of the publiſher ſecures to ſome all that ſort of recommendation which influences thoſe who are to be told how to like or diſlike;

diſlike; and in books, as in every thing elſe, that is at leaſt half the world.

But though this ſelf-held council ended in Marchmont's perſuading himſelf that his profits in that line muſt be circumſcribed, ſtill thoſe profits were an object to him. He was not now to learn how much any purſuit, and above all one in which a man engages from the influence of duty, elevates while it occupies the mind: the only difficulty was to call off his thoughts from the ſurrounding circumſtances, and obtain command enough over his faculties to exert them; convinced that the very attempt mitigated ſomewhat of the evils he ſuffered, and that it was more like a reaſonable being to ſtruggle with than helpleſsly to lament them. Some days afterwards, in a letter to Everſley, to whom he had expreſſed himſelf moſt grateful for his unwearied friendſhip, and declined every aſſiſtance that might, however remotely, injure

injure his friend, Marchmont wrote thus:

"Since I have been eaſier on account of my mother, and have daily hopes of ſeeing her, my mind has regained the force which I am willing to allow it ought never to have loſt. I have even projected ſome literary undertakings, and am enquiring for a bookſeller to whom they can be diſpoſed of to advantage. I find that I ſhould do well enough if I could but withdraw my thoughts altogether from two or three perſons: but when I look round me, conſider where I am, and by whoſe means—when the dark ſcroll of accumulated villany is unrolled by memory before me—when I conſider the cold-blooded malignity with which the moſt worthleſs of the brutes that diſgrace the human race triumph in my diſtreſſes, while a group of helpleſs and amiable women, a mother, a wife, yet

indeed

indeed a bride, and three ſweet ſiſters, are their victims—rage and indignation, not the leſs violent for being impotent, tear my heart to pieces; and I am forced to fly to Althea, whoſe preſence checks theſe paroxyſms—I haſten to hear her voice—I bid her read to me, and the monſters for a moment diſappear. I diſſolve into tears, and ſeem ſuddenly removed from being tormented by demons to the ſoothing ſociety of an angel.

"But I have given up many hours of my wife's time to my mother, and once Lucy and Milly have come to viſit me. This, however, is not a place for them even to enter, and I inſiſted on my patiently dejected Amelia's forbearing to make the experiment. Among ſo many perſons of almoſt every rank, there muſt be many profligate, daring, and unprincipled.—Suſtained in effrontery by numbers, and careleſs of conſequences, becauſe they can hardly be

in

in a worſe ſituation; ſuch men are not certainly thoſe to whoſe licentious eyes and remarks I would expoſe my ſiſters: yet among them daily does my Althea paſs. They generally underſtand who ſhe is: and as, guarded by my arm, ſhe croſſes the area in going or returning, I ſee them, Everſley, look upon her with awe. Lovely, uncommonly lovely as ſhe is, their admiration ſeems to have ſo much reverence mingled with it, that I do not believe, even if ſhe were unprotected, one of them, noiſy and boiſterous as they are, would offer her the ſlighteſt inſult. Yet there are times when I cannot forgive myſelf for having been the cauſe of making her an inmate of ſuch a place! and whatever fortitude I acquire for myſelf, I am a coward when for her I ſurvey the preſent, or look forward to the future.

"Did I ſuffer alone, I think I ſhould not fail in endurance; and after all, my friend, ſince I muſt accuſtom myſelf to impriſonment,

impriſonment, I ought to conſider it philoſophically, as it is very likely much of my life is to paſs in it, to diveſt it of its horrors. The greateſt for me is the ſight of miſery it is impoſſible for me to relieve—to ſee the progreſs of deſpondence and ill example on the young, whom ſome folly of their own, or the villany of others, had brought hither, and the helpleſs and gloomy reſignation of the old—to mark the palſied hands of induſtry, which, if not ſtruck by the withering demon of legal oppreſſion, might ſtill have been buſy in contributing to the public ſtock, and in maintaining in comfort and competence thoſe who now linger out their lives in ſordid wretchedneſs, and become unfit for ſociety; which having taught them to conſider themſelves as outcaſts, who can wonder that they learn to prey upon it? Nothing is more depreſſing than to paſs through that part of the priſon where the rooms of the poorer debtors are ſituated.

ſituated. Dirt and famine are every where viſible: the obſerver of any feeling is ſhocked to ſee a thouſand miſerable contrivances to ſupport an exiſtence which ſeems ſo little worth having; and ſhudders to think that half theſe ſtratagems go to the acquiſition of thoſe coarſe and deſtructive ſpirits, by which this very exiſtence may be forgotten! What I ſee around me is only one great example of an evil that pervades the whole kingdom, and of which every county preſents its ſhare. I ſet about calculating the numbers ſo confined in this land of freedom! and I enquire whether no remedy can be found againſt a circumſtance that ſurely is as diſgraceful as pernicious. Nay, I even venture to aſk whether ſuch an attempt would not do more honour to our Legiſlature than their arduous undertakings to preſerve hares and partridges for the pleaſures of the rich. If I had enjoyed my paternal fortune, Everſley, ſhould I have thought thus?

thus? Perhaps not. We are certainly, more than we are willing to allow, the creatures of accident; and it is very likely that if I, like many other men of my age, had from my infancy had nothing to do but to enjoy, I might have thought as little as they do of thoſe who have nothing to do but to ſuffer. You, my friend, who *are*, or at leaſt *were*, an Optimiſt, and have often declared for the doctrine of Leibnitz and Pope, will, perhaps, aſk me—'Of what uſe is all this reaſoning but to make yourſelf more unhappy? Admitting that all is *not* right, can you make it otherwiſe?'—Alas! no.—But it is by reaſon only that abuſes are gradually removed; and if we dare not uſe this privilege, and apply it here and there as we can, we are indeed ſunk below the ſavage, who lives and enjoys his animal exiſtence without it.

"The man born in a mine, accuſtomed to a certain manner of life, and to have

his wants ſupplied in his gloomy ſou-terrain, has no wiſh to gaze upon the ſun, to inhale the freſh air, to feaſt his eyes on the lovely colours of nature, becauſe he knows not what they are. But let him once aſcend to the ſurface of the earth, let him have the privilege of breathing freely, of feeling the vivifying influence of the ſun—and he muſt be a ſtupid and worthleſs being if he would voluntarily return to the darkneſs and ſtagnation of his former abode, although his actual ſubſiſtence, and even groſs enjoyments, are there eaſily within his reach. Juſt ſuch a being the man ſeems to me, who is contented to reſign, after having once felt it, his power of inveſtigating truth (though he cannot always find it), and content himſelf with ſyſtems formed for him by others who have an intereſt in keeping this reaſoning faculty in ſubordination.—I mean the men who ſay—

'But

'But they in ſooth muſt reaſon!—Curſes light
'On the proud talent!—'Twill at laſt undo us *.'

"Lawyers (you know how I love them, and with how much reaſon) have certainly cauſe enough to dread its exertion, and, while they affect to make it the rule of their own profeſſion, abſolutely deny the uſe of it to their clients. Indeed thoſe who *voluntarily* have any thing to do with *them*, have uſually not much to loſe.

"My ſimile of a mine, and of human beings buried in it, brings me to remark on the landſcape, or rather the priſon-ſcape around me. Even in the ſqualid wretchedneſs of theſe miſerable habitations, where, though lodgings are given in rotation, the poor ſell their right of ſhelter to thoſe who have ſtill ſomething left to purchaſe it, and are huddled together in caverns, where a

* Walpole, now Lord Orford.

man of only moderate fortune would not ſuffer his hounds to kennel; even in theſe noſe-offending regions of poverty and puniſhment that inſtinctive love of nature prevails, which points out what man ought to be, and marks his place in the creation as a cultivator of the earth; for, even in the dungeon, ſome faint memorial of vegetable life is conſoling to him—and the wretched woman, who toils from the dawn till the night, and hardly earns enough to keep from periſhing the meagre and ragged infants that ſurround her, makes even here ſome poor attempts at a garden.—

'. . . . . There the pitcher ſtands
'A fragment; and the ſpoutleſs tea-pot there;
'Sad witneſſes, how cloſe pent man regrets
'The Country—with what ardour he contrives
'A peep at Nature, when he can no more*.'

"I too feel a ſort of calenture of the mind, and languiſh for the wood walks

* Taſk, Book IV.

and

and downs, which are continually preſent to my imagination, peopled by my family and my Althea; and I tremble, as I watch her lovely countenance, and dread leſt the unwholeſome air, which muſt be generated in an encloſure like this, in the heats of ſummer too, ſhould injure her health. I ſometimes fancy that her eyes look heavy, and as if ſhe had been weeping in ſecret. I perſuade myſelf her complexion changes, and there is more of languor about her than ſhe is willing to avow; and then, Everſley, my fortitude again fails, and the moment ſhe leaves me, ſo as to be no longer affected with it, I relapſe into unavailing tranſports of rage and deſpair. She returns to me—ſhe gives me an account of my mother; holds out ſome new hope that ſhe has gathered from Dr. Warrington, who ſeems indefatigable in our ſervice, and the tumult of my ſpirits ſubſides, and once more I bluſh at my weakneſs.

"I believe that women, whom we have proudly called but children of a larger growth, have, when they poſſeſs good underſtandings, more fortitude than men. Not to recall to obſervation the heroines of Antiquity, I feel aſhamed of my impatience, when I contemplate the moſt illuſtrious woman* of modern times, ſitting in her dungeon amidſt the moſt degraded of the human ſpecies, to whoſe inſults ſhe was every moment liable. Torn from her only child, and uncertain of the fate of her reſpectable huſband, while her own ſeemed decided, and the ſcaffold abſolutely before her—yet ſuch was her firmneſs of mind, that ſhe could arrange her miſerable apartment, and call off her attention from the preſent horrors that ſurrounded, and the future that threatened her, and apply herſelf to botany and to muſic. However the part this

* This is again an anachroniſm, but ſuch as may well be forgiven.

extra-

extraordinary woman took in the republican government of France may have raiſed prejudice and hatred againſt her, who, that is capable of feeling true greatneſs of mind, can contemplate without admiration and reſpect ſuch ſublimity of mind? Who, circumſtanced as I am, whatever may be their party or their politics, can read without being ſenſible of this elevation the following ſentence:

'..... Peut-être un jour mes récits ingénus charmeront les inſtans de quelque infortunée captive, qui oubliera ſon ſort en s'attendriſſant ſur le mien; peut-être les Philoſophes, qui veulent peindre le cœur humain dans la ſuite d'un roman ou l'action d'un drame, trouveront-ils à l'étudier dans mon hiſtoire *.'

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* Hereafter, perhaps, my ingenuous narratives may ſooth the ſad moments of ſome unfortunate captive, who may awhile forget her own deſtiny in deploring mine.—Perhaps the Philoſopher, who in the progreſs of a romance or the action of a drama would deſcribe the human heart, may find his ſtudies of it aſſiſted by my hiſtory.—Appel à l'impartiel Poſtérité, par la Citoyenne Roland, vol. II. page 67.

While ſeveral days were, amid theſe thoughts and theſe projects, paſſed in a ſort of fluctuating philoſophy by Marchmont, Althea, appearing before him always calm and occaſionally cheerful, was very far from poſſeſſing internally the compoſure which, by efforts of courage and virtue, ſhe aſſumed. The hopes ſhe had indulged that Dr. Warrington could find means to ſoften the malignant ferocity of Mohun were gradually diminiſhed; for though he had done all, and even more than he promiſed, he obtained, by his firſt enquiry, no other information than that Mr. Mohun was gone into Lincolnſhire, and his return uncertain. Dr. Warrington then procured a direction to him there; and, without mentioning his buſineſs, wrote to ſay he wiſhed to know when he would be in London. The letter followed him to the houſes of ſome of his friends in other parts of the county; it was after many days longer than the uſual

courſe

courſe of the poſt would have brought it, that Dr. Warrington received an anſwer from Mohun; who, imagining he wanted to conſult him profeſſionally, condeſcended to inform him, that he believed he ſhould paſs a few days at his houſe in London, the laſt week in Auguſt, on his way to his annual ſhooting excurſion in Wales; and that then he would ſend to the Doctor, and be glad to ſee him. This put off any farther efforts for three weeks at leaſt, and then they were ſo uncertain of ſucceſs in removing not half the fetters by which Marchmont was bound, that Althea looked forward without hope of redreſs; while, on the other hand, Mrs. Marchmont, without any poſitive acceſſion of illneſs, ſeemed daily to decline in ſtrength, and to be very far gone in that diſeaſe which is ſlowly, and almoſt imperceptibly, fatal,

'The pining atrophy!'

For the ſake of Althea, and of her daughters, ſhe ſtruggled againſt the deep deſpondence that made her trying to live appear a taſk equally heavy and uſeleſs; and even forbore to repeat aloud the deſire that preyed on her heart to ſee her ſon—internally reſolved, if ſhe could obtain ſtrength enough, to be carried thither, to ſeek him in his priſon, ſince he was not allowed to come to her.

Dr. Warrington, who continued to viſit her, ſaw, with concern, the progreſs of a malady out of the reach of any ſkill to cure; and when he underſtood that the ſmall annuity, on which ſhe and her family now ſubſiſted, and which had been re-purchaſed by Mr. Everſley, dropped with her life; that her daughters would then be entirely deſtitute, and without a friend or a protector on earth but their impriſoned brother, his humanity urged him to procraſtinate at leaſt, if he could not entirely avert, the hour when this unhappy

mother

mother was to be torn for ever from her helpleſs girls. This, he thought, might be done by procuring her an interview with her ſon out of his confinement, for into it he would by no means hear of her going. The Doctor, therefore, offered himſelf as ſecurity; but there were forms which could not be gone through on the day he took this good-natured reſolution, and on the next he was under an abſolute promiſe to viſit one of his patients thirty miles from London, which would inevitably detain him the whole day: this humane preſcription, therefore, was, of neceſſity, poſtponed till the next. Althea, as ſhe took leave of Dr. Warrington, warmly expreſſed her gratitude.—"Alas! my dear Madam!" ſaid he, as he held her hand, "I would to God I could do more than this, which will be, I fear me, of little final uſe towards the preſervation of our valuable friend. I am by no means rich, notwithſtanding my extenſive practice. In

the early part of life I had a large family of collateral relations to aſſiſt; I married a woman I loved without a fortune, and have now ſix children of my own—ſo that to pay ſuch a ſum as three thouſand pounds is not in my power. But ſomething or other muſt be done for the relief of all of you; I cannot bear to ſee ſo many worthy and amiable people ſo cruelly circumſtanced."

Althea, ſpeechleſs with gratitude and emotion, ſaw him depart; and again nouriſhed hopes that their troubles might, by ſuch a friend, be removed. Some ray of comfort was indeed abſolutely neceſſary to ſuſtain her fainting courage; for circumſtances had lately occurred, which, added to her continual ſtruggle to appear cheerful while anguiſh preyed on her heart, nearly overcame her.

One of theſe was, the impertinence with which ſhe had frequently been ſpoken to by a young man of genteel

though

though careleſs appearance, who was almoſt always in the lobby, and ſometimes walking in the ſpace ſhe had to traverſe between the priſon and Mrs. Marchmont's lodgings; and though Fenchurch was with her till Marchmont himſelf, who always waited for her, gave her his arm, yet neither the uneaſineſs his addreſſing himſelf to her evidently gave her, nor the ſpirited remonſtrances of her ſervant, ſeemed to have the leaſt effect. His converſation conſiſted of the moſt extravagant compliments on her beauty; in declaring that a man, who had ſuch a companion in a priſon, ought to think himſelf in paradiſe, and other rhodomontade of the ſame nature, which, if it terrified and ſhocked her at firſt, gave her ſtill more ſerious alarm when it became conſtantly repeated; for the moment ſhe was out of ſight of Marchmont, this perſecutor ſuddenly appeared, and followed her with his inſulting

ſpeeches

ſpeeches till ſhe reached the houſe ſhe was going to.

To ſpeak of this to Marchmont would be to cauſe a quarrel that might produce the moſt dreadful conſequences; yet ſhe thought that, if it ever ſhould come to his knowledge, he would be extremely hurt at her enduring, even for one day, inſolence of ſuch a nature. She in vain expoſtulated with the man, and repreſented how cruel it was to affront a woman, who, while attending on her impriſoned huſband, could not eſcape from him. He proteſted that he meant no affront; that he intended only to ſhew his reſpectful adoration, and to aſk, moſt humbly to aſk leave to wait upon her, as the moſt devoted of her ſlaves.—Althea bade Fenchurch enquire who he was, with ſome intention of entreating Dr. Warrington to ſpeak to him. Fenchurch learned that he was a young man of family, who, having ſpent his own fortune,

fortune, and as much of theirs as they would part with, was now confined for a debt of ſeven or eight thouſand pounds; and that his family, knowing no way of keeping him from impriſonment, whither he would certainly plunge again, by his wild extravagance, as ſoon as he was releaſed, had determined to let him remain there, and contributed among them, as they were all very rich, to his ſupport: ſo that, making up his mind for the preſent, he had taken poſſeſſion of the rooms called the ſtate rooms, where he lived in a conſtant courſe of deep drinking, and ſuch diſſipation as was yet within his reach. He failed not to find companions enough, and conſoled himſelf for the loſs of better ſociety, by being the principal perſon in that he now collected around him. In conſequence of the money he ſcattered heedleſsly about, all the turnkeys and runners of the priſon were his

his moſt humble ſervants; and, ſecurity having been given to the Marſhal, he had the liberty of the rules.

From the intruſion of ſuch a man Althea was utterly at a loſs how to defend herſelf, without involving Marchmont in a quarrel with him. He was artful enough never to attempt ſpeaking to her when her huſband was with her, but had made ſome civil advances towards an acquaintance with Marchmont, which Althea had diſcouraged, ſaying, that any acquaintance in their preſent ſituation would be diſtreſſing to her, and would merely break in on the time which they could either paſs together quietly, or in conſultations upon buſineſs; and that ſuch a man as Mr. Carlingbury was repreſented to be, was not a proper perſon to aſſociate with his ſiſters, ſhould they ever come to their apartment. Marchmont, to whom ſociety was not only indifferent but painful, had no will but that of Althea, and

ſhunned

ſhunned any connection either with Mr. Carlingbury, or any other of his fellow-priſoners.

Within the laſt week it was not only the inſufferable importunity of this perſon, but the ſtrange manners of another, that had perplexed and alarmed Althea. She had obſerved a man about ſixty, plainly and rather coarſely dreſſed, and without any thing remarkable in his appearance, whom ſhe had ſeveral times paſſed near the door of the priſon, and twice or three times within it. He had fixed his eyes upon her with ſo ſteady, yet ſo odd a look, that ſhe ſhrunk from him involuntarily; but when, aſſailed by her daily tormentor, he had met her without the walls, his countenance had indicated ſomething, which, though Althea did not give herſelf time to inveſtigate what it meant, made her tremble.—Yet, as he had never ſpoken to her, ſhe had no pretence to complain, though every

every time ſhe ſaw him her terror increaſed.

The interview only for a few moments procured with difficulty between Marchmont and his mother, by the intervention of Dr. Warrington, produced a ſcene which only ſerved to diſtreſs them both, while Althea thought ſhe perceived Mrs. Marchmont grow worſe afterwards; and Marchmont himſelf, ſhocked at the appearance of his mother, was, during the reſt of the day, in a ſtate of the moſt dreadful depreſſion. This was, however, ſomewhat alleviated by a letter from Everſley, which, without mentioning particulars, gave him hopes that this ſteady friend would ſoon be with him; and he ſaid in a poſtſcript, "Have you heard that your wife's couſin, Mr. Trevyllian, the laſt male of the family of Haſcombe Court, has been dead ſome weeks? His two ſiſters alſo are dead long ſince, and (which I did not know till

till lately) of the remaining branches of the family none ſurvive, but Mrs. Marchmont, your wife, and a Mrs. Thoreſby. I have always underſtood that the landed eſtates were ſo entailed, that they could not be alienated: I know them to be between five and ſix thouſand a year, and Trevyllian, if he could, would not have impaired them. On the contrary, I always heard, and had reaſon to believe, he laid up money. I have written to deſire Willis, my ſteward, would enquire whether he made a will, and who are ſaid to be his heirs at law. On your ſide it might be worth while to make ſome enquiry. Employ Bargrave if he can be of any uſe to you. I, on my part, will let you know, ſhould I hear, in the newſpaper phraſe, 'of ſomething to your advantage.'"

Marchmont had thought ſo little of any thing but Althea herſelf, that any ſuch contingencies as the preſent were quite new to him. Althea herſelf hardly knew

knew more of them than he did. She recollected having gone into mourning for one of her couſins, but, as ſhe had never ſeen any of them above once, when ſhe was in town for a few days, *they* had made no impreſſion on her memory at all; while all ſhe could recall of Mr. Trevyllian himſelf was, that her aunt was ſlighted by him, and diſliked him; which, together with the hurry he was in to have her remove from the houſe where her aunt had left her, did not make her feel at all concerned to hear he was no more; while the hope of poſſeſſing a ſhare of ſuch a property, and giving it to Marchmont at this period, made her for the firſt time in her life eager about an affair of money. Who Mrs. Thoreſby was, or how much ſhe might have the advantage of her as to nearneſs of kindred, Althea knew not: but the hope of eventually poſſeſſing enough to liberate and enrich Marchmont was ſo flattering to her imagination,

gination, that ſhe wiſhed to ſet out immediately herſelf on the enquiry, and propoſed going the next morning to Mr. Bargrave, and giving him ſuch information as ſhe was able to recollect, to guide his enquiry. To this Marchmont conſented, though far leſs ſanguine as to the event than Althea. He had already experienced the difficulty of making out claims, which there was no money to ſupport; and he had reaſon to remember his little ſucceſs, when a lawyer told him of the uſurious and diſhoneſt proceeding of Sir Ralph Gunſton, in regard to his father's mortgages, by which his adviſer thought that ſome of them might be ſet aſide; but who, when he found that Marchmont had no money to carry on the ſuit in Chancery, had declined engaging in it; talked of the uncertainty of the law, and the delays and expences of a court of equity; and concluded with ſaying, that the firſt loſs was the beſt. This man, however,

had

had contrived to keep his papers, and to make a heavy charge againſt him, which deprived him of the power of attempting to procure redreſs by means of any other perſon; while, by what he *had* done, he only irritated the malignity and alarmed the cupidity of Sir Ralph's heirs, and gave a more immediate cauſe of hatred to Sir Audley and Lady Dacres, beſides what they naturally bore him, on account of the poverty and decay of his family, and the injuries they knew he had ſuſtained, which, as they had the advantage of thoſe injuries, they could not forgive. After ſuch an experiment, Marchmont could not venture to flatter himſelf that fortune did not again mean to mock him; and Althea doubted while ſhe tried to hope. There was, however, a perſon better informed than either of them——Lady Dacres had from her youth been accuſtomed to calculate on contingencies; and when both the ſiſters of Mr. Trevyllian died within

a few

a few months of each other, ſhe had bent a keen eye on Althea's chance of ſucceeding to half his eſtate. So good did ſhe believe this chance to be, that it almoſt influenced her to check her ill-humour and avarice, in order to keep Althea with her, and unmarried: but the perverſe circumſtance of her going to the Marchmonts baffled her ſchemes; though ſhe perſuaded herſelf that while ſhe withheld, and made her preſent fortune doubtful, ſhe muſt ſtill remain ſingle. Her marriage, therefore, and with Marchmont, of which ſhe was immediately appriſed, had extremely vexed and irritated her; while, as if to puniſh her by more immediate evils for all ſhe had inflicted on Althea, her eldeſt ſon, who had ſold out of the army, and who was not yet nineteen, had entered on ſuch a career as threatened to diſſipate, even before he came of age, the large property which he was to inherit from the uſurer his grandfather, and the place-

man

man Sir Audley. He had already taken up conſiderable ſums of money, and, unaffected either by duty or gratitude, openly repined at the large income his mother poſſeſſed, and the fortunes ſecured to his brother and three ſiſters, which prevented his being able to anticipate to a ſtill greater extent his future revenues. Lady Dacres, unwilling to complain of a ſon whom ſhe had always ſuppoſed muſt be a miracle of perfection, had the daily mortification of hearing of exploits, and conſequent expences, which ſhe had no longer the power to check, or even to attempt reſtraining; for her ſon never came near her, and the intelligence ſhe gained of him was either from the notoriety of his conduct, or from Jews and money-lenders, who applied for information whether the ſtatement he had given of his future proſpects were juſt. This ſevere mortification did not ſweeten the lady's temper; but, miſerable herſelf, ſhe found

found a ſad ſatisfaction in making every one about her as miſerable as ſhe could. The only ſmile that had been ſeen on her face for ſome months, was obſerved there when ſhe heard that Marchmont was thrown into priſon; where, from the magnitude of the debt, it was likely he would remain for life. She not only recounted this to every body who viſited her at Capelſtoke, with the utmoſt marks of ſatisfaction, but gave to all that would liſten to her a long hiſtory of Althea's miſbehaviour to herſelf. Then making an epiſode, ſhe deſcribed the Marchmont family, who were, ſhe ſaid, a ſet of wretched paupers; and concluded with a diſſertation on the challenge, which ſhe ſaid Marchmont had had the effrontery to ſend to Mr. Mohun, only for his friendly zeal in wiſhing to execute the will of her late dear Sir Audley, and for which ſhe heartily hoped he might be ſeverely puniſhed. Yet notwithſtanding all her Ladyſhip's ſagacity and per-

fect information, as to Althea and the family to which ſhe now belonged, ſhe choſe, on receiving the news of Mr. Trevyllian's death out of the weſt, and an enquiry what was become of her daughter-in-law, to anſwer very coldly, that the young lady having left her for ſome time ſhe knew nothing about her, and rather believed ſhe was gone abroad. Nobody but Everſley was intereſted enough about Althea to trouble themſelves with her claims; and Mr. Thoreſby himſelf brought up a lawyer, and, recollecting the good old ſaying, that poſſeſſion is nine points of the law, was already in poſſeſſion of Mr. Trevyllian's landed property, when Everſley wrote to announce to his friends that the ſucceſſion was open. Althea having called on her way on Mrs. Marchmont, and communicated the cauſe of her preſent expedition, and having found her too rather better than ſhe had expected from what ſhe had obſerved the evening before

before, ſet out, with a lighter heart than ſhe had long felt, attended by Fenchurch, to walk to Mr. Bargrave's chambers in Lincoln's-inn, which ſhe thought ſhe could eaſily accompliſh; and having never ſeen ſo much of it before, ſhe purpoſed going through the city: but ſhe had not half achieved the Borough, before, diſguſted by bad ſmells and diſagreeable objects, and half ſtunned by noiſe, ſhe was glad to follow the advice of Fenchurch, and get into a hackney coach, which ſoon conveyed her to Mr. Bargrave's chambers. She ſent up Fenchurch to let him know ſhe was there; but a clerk appeared, who informed her that, the ſummer circuit being begun, Mr. Bargrave was gone to York to be preſent at a cauſe that was to be tried there of very great importance to one of his clients; and that as he afterwards intended to make a tour among his relations, who were of that

county, his ſtay in the whole might poſſibly be of ſix or ſeven weeks.

Vexed at a circumſtance which muſt not only delay the enquiry about which ſhe was ſo eager, but cruelly impede all the buſineſs ſo material towards Marchmont's enlargement—ſhe was now to return diſappointed. As ſhe had yet time for a walk, ſhe diſcharged the coach, meaning to proceed on foot at leaſt ſome part of the way back to Marchmont's ſad abode; and remembered that ſhe could take this occaſion to purchaſe ſome coloured papers, and other materials, for Amelia and Lucy; who ſtill, as far as their attendance on their mother would allow, continued their little manufactory. Penſively meditating on what could now be done to promote an enquiry about Mr. Trevyllian's property, ſhe heeded not the noiſes around her, till a voice was heard eagerly calling to her, and ordering a carriage to ſtop. Althea looked up and

ſaw

ſaw Dr. Warrington before her, who taking her hands in his friendly way, but with even more than his uſual warmth, ſaid, "I am glad, very glad indeed, to have met you ſo unexpectedly; for I ſhould not otherwiſe have ſeen you till the evening, ſo indiſpenſably is my day engaged. But we have ſo little time, that I am happy to ſave ſo much on your account. Mr. Mohun is in town ſome time ſooner than he intended, but only for two days. I have ſeen him; and really, from the converſation I have had with him, I do believe, that if you were yourſelf to ſee him, all theſe diſagreeable differences might be removed, and the affairs in general, at leaſt ſo far as depends on him, ſettled to your ſatisfaction."

Althea bluſhed deeply, utterly at a loſs what to reply. Dr. Warrington appeared not to have the leaſt idea of Mohun's former pretenſions to her: ſhe had avoided mentioning it before, and

now it was impoſſible to explain it. She remained a moment confuſed and heſitating.—Dr. Warrington, hurried by his own buſineſs, and eagerly anxious about hers, ſaid, "Suppoſe, as we are not far from his houſe, and I know he is at home, I were to carry you thither? I am obliged to go directly into the City myſelf, from whence I muſt return to an appointment in Hanover Square at one o'clock; but I can ſet you down in Lincoln's-inn-fields, without going out of my way: and who knows, my dear Madam, but thus by one ſucceſsful ſally we may carry our point? Come, come," added he, "you have ſo much ſenſe as well as ſenſibility, that from ſuch a cauſe I know you will not ſhrink, and I am ſure it is impoſſible for any one to reſiſt ſuch a pleader." As he ſaid this, he led her towards his chariot. Fenchurch had already let down the ſtep; and Althea, hardly knowing how ſhe got there, was ſeated in it, while it was rapidly driven

driven the little diſtance from Holborn to Lincoln's-inn-fields. Recovering her breath and recollection, and being well aſſured that Marchmont would greatly diſapprove of her going to Mohun's, whatever advantage might accrue from it, ſhe at length ſaid, "But, dear Sir! let us conſider before I decide to wait on Mr. Mohun; I am not quite ſure it is proper—I am afraid that ....." "Not proper?" interrupted Dr. Warrington, "my dear Mrs. Marchmont, why not proper? Can there be any impropriety in your applying, on buſineſs that ſo nearly concerns you, to your father's friend, to his executor, to the man to whoſe care he in ſome degree entruſted you? I am perſuaded there is not a prude in the kingdom that would think ſo. I really am very ſolicitous for the interview, becauſe I know it will do a great deal of good to our poor ſuffering friends; and ſo take courage, my fair and reſiſtleſs advocate, and God

ſpeed your endeavours!" Thus ſaying, the coach ſtopped, the door opened, and Althea was left ſtanding before Mr. Mohun's door——ſo undetermined to go in that ſhe meditated her eſcape the moment Dr. Warrington was out of ſight; but the quickneſs of his footman had prevented her; for, accuſtomed to rapidity by attendance on his maſter, he had thundered at the door before the carriage drew up: and now it was opened by Mr. Mohun's ſervants, who advancing to Althea, who was, they concluded, the perſon to be admitted, one of them told her that Mr. Mohun was at home, but that moment going out. Althea, glad of an opportunity to eſcape, was haſtily retreating from the door, when Mohun appeared at it haſtily going out. He ſeemed ſurpriſed at the ſight of her, and ſtill more when his ſervant ſaid, "A lady, Sir, deſires to ſpeak to you." Bowing, he retreated a few ſteps into the hall, and, throwing open the

the door of a parlour, desired her to walk in. Althea still hung back, and hesitated: "I believe, Sir," said she, "the present is no proper time—" She was unable to finish the sentence; but already in the room, and hardly able from confusion of mind to support herself, she sat down. Mohun, whose eyes eagerly ran over her person, placed himself by her.

CHAP. XII.

Fà di tutto quaggia gioco insolente
La severa fortuna, e al pianto e sorda.
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- -
Così da lieto stato a vila acerba
Ne sospinge a sua voglia: onde più fermo
Contro a cappriccj suoi non hassi schermo
Che ripensare ognor che fè non serba
E mirarla d'un votto non curante
Qual femina vagante
Di nostri voti indegna, e che tradisce
Per malvaggia natura;
Poi volubile torna, ed offerisce
Quand attri men la cura.

HAD not all these circumstances followed each other with a rapidity that gave Althea no time for recollection, the

the dignity of conſcious worth, and the contempt ſhe felt towards Mohun, might have enabled her to have gone through the ſcene with calmneſs, if not with courage; but now too many uneaſy ſenſations aſſailed her at once, and ſuddenly. She apparently was come to aſk a favour of a man, whom ſhe had always deteſted; and who had been the cauſe of the coldneſs and ſeparation between her and her father. But theſe injuries were light, compared to thoſe he had ſince inflicted on her by the tyrannical attempt to withhold her fortune in conjunction with Lady Dacres, and the cowardice and cruelty with which he had firſt inſulted and then confined Marchmont. Inſtead of addreſſing herſelf to him, ſhe wondered how ſhe had ſuffered herſelf, by the ſudden and miſtaken zeal of Dr. Warrington, to be hurried into the preſence of a man, whoſe very ſight was odious to her: and when (his countenance expreſſing at once

his triumph, and all the hateful paſſions he felt) he aſked to be favoured with her commands, Althea was unable to find words to anſwer him. Mohun, who, whatever other motives he had for diſtreſſing Marchmont, had never hoped it would throw her into his power, now began to ſee that it might very poſſibly have that effect; he therefore ſoftened his voice, and, deſiring her to recollect in what he could ſerve her, rang, and directed that ſome glaſſes of ice, and other refreſhments, might inſtantly be brought. Althea found her voice to decline them, and aroſe to go; but Mohun was by no means diſpoſed to let her. He thought that the confuſion and diſtreſs in which he ſaw her were occaſioned partly by her repentance of the indiſcreet ſtep ſhe had taken in marrying, and partly by her wiſhing to repair it by regaining his favour. His preſumption, his total want of principle and delicacy, carried him ſtill farther;

and

and he believed it poſſible, that Marchmont, weary of poverty and impriſonment, from which he had no other means of eſcaping, had ſent his wife as an advocate by whoſe eloquent beauty his chains would drop off. Exulting in this idea, Mohun could hardly help ſaying aloud, "Marchmont, thou art a more ſenſible fellow than I took thee for!" But the ſpecies of ſatisfaction his tongue forbore to utter, was expreſſed by his eyes, as, directly fixed on the varying countenance of Althea, he waited for an anſwer to his queſtion—"What were her commands?" "It was Dr. Warrington, Sir," ſaid ſhe, "I did not myſelf think of troubling you .... but the Doctor .... having .... I having met the Doctor, he thought, he ſuppoſed ...."

"Whatever or whoever procured me the honour of ſeeing you in *my* houſe, Madam, has conferred on me the greateſt obligation; *you* can only add to it by putting

putting it in my power to ſhew you how greatly I love the memory of my dear friend, your excellent father; and how happy I ſhould account myſelf, if ....”

Hypocriſy was always ſo deteſtable and ſo contemptible in the opinion of Althea, that ſuch an inſtance of it ſerved by rouſing her indignation to reſtore her reſolution. Interrupting therefore this inſulting cant, ſhe ſaid, “If you had any regard for my father, Sir, the only way to ſhew it, the only way, indeed, to acquit yourſelf with integrity to the world, is to act juſtly as his executor. If I have indeed any buſineſs with you, though I did not voluntarily come hither, it muſt be, you are well aware, on the ſubject of my fortune—which you can, I know, have no legal power to detain. He, whoſe right it is, you have cruelly, and I will ſay baſely, prevented from aſſerting his claim.—Though I certainly did not mean to come to this houſe; yet, ſince I am here,

here, I beg Mr. Mohun will underſtand, that I come to make that claim myſelf."

"Charming creature!" Mohun longed to ſay, as while ſhe ſpoke he watched the play of her beautiful countenance, animated as by anger—"Charming creature! and thou art thrown away upon a beggar!" If he did not ſay this, there was ſuch an expreſſion in his eyes, that Althea turned from him with terror. He ſeemed meditating how to model his anſwer to promote the views which now aroſe ſo invitingly in his imagination; while Althea, whoſe ſwelling heart would, ſhe thought, betray her into tears, once more roſe from her ſeat, and, making an effort to conquer the hyſteric ſenſation ſhe felt, ſaid, "I believe, Sir, the queſtion I have to put to you is very eaſily anſwered—Will you or will you not transfer to Mr. Marchmont the two thouſand pounds that become mine on my marriage?"

"The

"The queſtion, my dear Madam," ſaid he, offering to take her hand, but ſhe turned from him, "the queſtion, I do aſſure you, is *not* ſo eaſily anſwered. There are in the ſimpleſt caſes of this ſort rules, forms, precautions of law, which . . . . . It is quite impoſſible for me to explain them to you; but, upon my honour, it is *not* in my power to act with the precipitancy, the haſte, and in the unguarded manner which ſeemed to be expected of me. Beſides, my dear Madam, recollect that I am only *one* executor; and without the concurrence of Lady Dacres, who ſet her face againſt the meaſure, which (you will excuſe me, I ſpeak only after her Ladyſhip) ſhe thought as ruinous to you, as contrary to the direct will of Sir Audley——I ſay, Lady Dacres, who in this caſe poſſeſſes equal power with myſelf—being averſe, what could I do?"

"You

"You might at leaſt," ſaid Althea, whoſe ſpirits and preſence of mind were now much reſtored, "at leaſt have treated like a gentleman the perſon to whom I have given a right to make the demand: you needed not, Sir, have added oppreſſion to inſult."

Mohun ſaw what turn he could give even to this nefarious tranſaction. He knew ſo little of the mind and heart of Althea, and was ſo thoroughly ſatisfied of his own maſterly talents, that he fancied he could deceive her even in what was moſt evidently againſt him.—Affecting, therefore, to ſigh deeply, he ſaid, in an under tone—"It often happens, dear Miſs Dacres——I beg your pardon—it often happens, Madam, that we are, in the courſe of irreſiſtible events, dragged, compelled, driven, urged, forced to take meaſures to which our hearts, feelings, ſentiments, and tendencies, are utterly averſe. What would you

you ſay, if you were told, that the meaſure I adopted againſt the perſon who on your account alone could give me a ſecond thought, was intended to prevent greater and more ſerious calamities?"

"I ſhould ſay," replied Althea, "that of ſuch a pretence I did not believe one word."

"And yet," ſaid Mohun, advancing his chair a little nearer to hers, as he offered her ſome of the refreſhments that were brought, "and yet it is poſſible that nothing can be more true.—I dare not, I do not wiſh to hint the moſt remotely at any faults of temper, or deficiency of prudence, in any of thoſe *you* honour with your regard. It is too late indeed now; would to heaven it were not!—but indeed the family of the Marchmonts—why muſt I ſay it?—the miſconduct of the young man has been too evident. If you had deigned to have conſulted your true friends—but

I ſee

I ſee you take what I have to ſay amiſs—yet a moment's patience, I conjure you to hear . . . . ."

"No, Sir!" cried Althea, riſing and haſtening towards the door, "I have already heard too much. If your former conduct excited my indignation, is ſuch converſation calculated to abate it?—No, Sir! it merely adds another ſentiment to my abhorrence, and that is—contempt!"

The haughty ſoul of Mohun, inſtead of being repulſed and abaſhed by the reſentment of offended innocence, roſe arrogantly to contemplate the delight it would afford to humble this indignant beauty. He ſcorned not, therefore, to ſtoop to the meaneſt conceſſions to appeaſe her—beſought her to hear him; and being always of opinion that women, whatever ſlight difference of character may ariſe from underſtanding or education, are really alike in weakneſs and vanity, and to be won by the ſame means—

means—he ventured, after giving Althea to underſtand that the fate of Marchmont was entirely in his power, to hint, in terms that could not be miſunderſtood, that it was his unconquerable paſſion for *her* that had betrayed him into ſuch harſh conduct towards the man who had ſupplanted him in her favour, and whom he could not bear to ſee happy and triumphant. He pleaded that

'The faults of love by love are juſtified!'

and imputing Althea's ſilence to the combat between vanity and intereſt on one ſide, againſt the dignity and reſerve ſhe thought it neceſſary to affect on the other, he proceeded to the moſt unequivocal profeſſions of his paſſion for her; and at length added, in terms that could not be miſinterpreted, that Marchmont's releaſe and future proſperity depended altogether on herſelf; and that,

on

on condition of her allowing him to renew his acquaintance as one of the intimate friends of her father, and looking upon him as the moſt devoted and attached of thoſe friends, Marchmont ſhould be releaſed, and her fortune be immediately given up—himſelf, however, continuing her truſtee; and he added, that his intereſt ſhould be uſed to procure for Marchmont ſome eſtabliſhment, that might put him into a rank not unworthy of that of the wife it was his ſupreme good fortune to poſſeſs.

If Althea remained ſilent while her ears were affronted by ſuch an harangue, it was not becauſe ſhe ſuffered it patiently, but amazement and terror took from her, for a moment, the power to anſwer. Ill as ſhe had ever thought of Mohun, ſuch a daring and cruel inſult exceeded all ſhe had believed him capable of; and ſhe was petrified with horror at the idea that ſhe was in this man's

man's houſe, and perhaps might not be allowed to eſcape from it. Diſdaining to anſwer what ſhe was ſhocked even to have heard, and recollecting with comfort that Fenchurch waited for her, ſhe turned indignantly from Mohun, before he had finiſhed the laſt ſentence, and rang the bell with ſuch effect that two of Mohun's footmen, accuſtomed to obey inſtantly their maſter's ſummons, appeared; and Althea, deſiring one of them to ſend her ſervant up, walked directly into the hall, and from thence into the ſtreet—where, Fenchurch immediately following her, ſhe enquired which was the way to the neareſt ſtand of coaches. Fenchurch, alarmed by her look and manner, enquired if he ſhould call one?—She could only anſwer—"No, no!—do not leave me!—but ſhew me the quickeſt way to a coach."—This he did; and Althea began to walk ſo faſt, that when they arrived at the ſpot ſhe was breathleſs, and with difficulty

ſiculty ſtepped into the hack which Fenchurch beckoned to—directing him to let it be driven over Blackfriars-bridge to the priſon.

It had proceeded almoſt half way, before the ſtunned ſenſes of Althea allowed her to conſider ſteadily the ſcene ſhe had juſt gone through: but when ſhe became able to reflect upon it, ſhe ſaw at once all the difficulties and dangers which the well-meant but ill-judged zeal of Dr. Warrington had brought her into. To periſh in indigence was her fixed reſolution, rather than ever again apply to Mohun, or ſuffer him to be applied to on her behalf as a matter of favour. But how could ſhe venture to relate to her huſband the inſult ſhe had received, when ſhe doubted whether he would not feel himſelf injured and offended by her having unguardedly made the viſit that had brought it on? Yet how to him,

from

from whom ſhe had never concealed a thought of her heart ſince he had been its maſter, how ſhould ſhe hide the accumulated troubles ſhe ſuffered under? Still, to diſcloſe to her huſband the converſation with which Mohun had dared to entertain her, was to aggravate all his anxieties of mind by impotent anger, and perhaps give him ſuch an impreſſion of her imprudence as he might never forget. While this point was yet in debate, ſhe ſaw herſelf near the end of her journey; and, ſtopping the coach, directed Fenchurch to order it to Mrs. Marchmont's lodgings, determined to conſult Lucy before ſhe took any reſolution. It occurred to her, that ſhe muſt give Fenchurch a caution not to ſay to his maſter where ſhe had been; and even this precaution, though given with no other deſign than to ſave Marchmont from pain, was ſo unlike the uſual tenor of her conduct, and had, ſhe thought,

thought, ſo odd an appearance, that, as ſhe ſpoke to him, her voice faltered, and her cheeks were dyed with bluſhes.

Lucy flew down to her.—"Well, my dear Althea!" cried ſhe eagerly, "you who are always the bearer of comfort and good tidings—my mother has been very impatient for your return, perſuading herſelf that you are to be every way the guardian angel of her ſon: but . . . . what is the matter, my ſweet ſiſter? You look greatly fatigued!"—Althea then briefly related what had paſſed; which ſhe begged Lucy not to mention to any body, and to adviſe her what it was beſt for her to do as to revealing or hiding this diſagreeable encounter from Marchmont.

Lucy heard her with a degree of horror.—Having already conceived a dreadful opinion of this man, as well from his general character as from Althea's and her brother's ſufferings, ſhe now imagined that he had a motive, and cer-

tainly wanted not will, to complete their ruin. Marchmont, though one of the beſt-tempered men in the world, was, when rouſed, extremely paſſionate; and Lucy thought with Althea, that if to the injuries he had already received from Mohun this cruel affront were added, his juſt indignation, which, priſoner as he was, he could not ſhew to the cowardly wretch who had inſulted him, would either break out in ſome ſtart of violence injurious to his intereſt, or prey upon his temper and his health. Mohun, it was probable, would go out of town, and think no more of the calamities he had inflicted, than to triumph in their continuance. It was poſſible that nothing might ever be known of the viſit; and then they were only where they were before, if Althea could only aſſume courage enough to anſwer any queſtions Marchmont might aſk in a way that might give him no reaſon to expect any thing extraordinary had happened.

pened. Of the circumſtances of her morning's walk ſhe had only to relate, that Mr. Bargrave was not at home; and if ſhe could not put on her uſually calm and cheerful air, her dejection might eaſily paſs for the effect of diſappointment and fatigue.

This advice coinciding with Althea's own opinion, ſhe determined to purſue it. She endeavoured to compoſe herſelf, and paid a ſhort viſit to Mrs. Marchmont; and Fenchurch being returned from his maſter, to whom ſhe had ſent him, ſhe went back to the confinement where Marchmont expected her.

He had already learned from his ſervant, that Mr. Bargrave was not to be found; but when he had put two or three other queſtions to him, the poor fellow, unuſed to any prevarication with his maſter, appeared ſo confuſed, and blundered ſo much, that Marchmont was alarmed, though he knew not at what.—When Althea appeared, whoſe

nerves were not ſteadied by having met on her way both the men whoſe conſtant notice perſecuted her, Marchmont no ſooner ſaw her, than he perceived that ſomething unuſual had occaſioned her agitation; while the queſtions he put to her ſo much increaſed it, that ſhe at length felt her ſpirits quite conquered, and burſt into tears. Marchmont then reproached himſelf with having ſuffered her to go.—"I know not," ſaid he, "by what overſight it was that I conſented to your going in ſearch of Bargrave: if he had been met with, and had ſet about the enquiry with more zeal than I expect, little would it indeed avail me if I were to purchaſe it at the expence of one hour of your health. But," added he, "what is the matter with Fenchurch?—The fellow looks as if he had ſeen a ghoſt; and, inſtead of anſwering my queſtions, gaped and ſtared as if he were ſtruggling to hide ſome great ſecret. My mother I ſaw this morning

while

while you were abſent, and ſhe is not ſurely fallen ſince into a ſtate which you wiſh to conceal from me?"

Althea now aſſured him, though in faltering and weak accents, that nothing more than unuſual fatigue had affected her—added to ſome degree of chagrin at the delay in all their buſineſs that Mr. Bargrave's abſence muſt occaſion.

Of this, ſince it ſeemed to hurt Althea, Marchmont made light; but his ſpirits never were in reality more depreſſed than they now were for ſome days. The intelligence he expected from Everſley came not; and the proſpect of Trevyllian's ſucceſſion ſeemed fading into air. Of Forreſter, whom it would have given him ſo much pleaſure to ſee, he heard nothing. He had once ſent his ſervant to enquire at Lord Stanwarden's, but had very little ſatisfaction from the anſwer; and at Lord Rochdale's he was told, that Captain Forreſter was in England, but very ill, and,

by the advice of his phyſician, gone to Bath inſtead of coming to London.—If from diſtant quarters all ſeemed a blank, his home view was yet more gloomy.—Althea viſibly loſt that elaſticity of mind which had hitherto been the cheerful ſupport of them all.—Marchmont ſaw that ſhe ſtruggled againſt the deſpondence that every day became deeper. He obſerved ſomething particularly apprehenſive in her manner whenever ſhe went out, and uncommon anxiety to have the ſervant with her; and he learned that the walks in the fields ſhe had ſometimes taken with his ſiſters were now entirely at an end.—The unpleaſantneſs of ſuch walks at this ſeaſon of heat and duſt, and her wiſh to paſs every moment either with him or his mother, were aſſigned as her reaſons for this alteration; but Marchmont ſtill thought he ſaw ſome myſtery which he did not comprehend; and, without any decided object, his reſtleſſneſs increaſed,

creaſed, and his confinement became more inſupportable.

Dr. Warrington too, after his accidental interview with Althea, ſeemed, for ſome days, to have forſaken them.—He perſuaded himſelf that her ſeeing Mr. Mohun would do every thing that was effectual towards the accommodation of the affairs; and that ſuch an arrangement was the only circumſtance that could reſtore the health of Mrs. Marchmont, for whom the power of medicine could do nothing effectual: and having been extremely haraſſed with buſineſs, he took the opportunity of the abſence from London of moſt of his patients, to enjoy a ſhort interval at a houſe where, during the ſummer, his family reſided in Hertfordſhire.—Every one of the friends then, on whom Marchmont and Althea had depended, ſeemed at once to have forſaken them; and there had not yet occurred, in the life of the former, any period at which

manly reſolution was ſo neceſſary to enable him to riſe above this accumulation of evil, and to prevent his forſaking himſelf, or rather thoſe who alone were objects of his ſolicitude.

With what courage and tranquillity he could, he now ſat down to his literary labour. He had found a purchaſer who agreed to give him a liberal price for a work of imagination, if, upon peruſing the firſt volume, he found it likely to anſwer his purpoſe; and, diſcouraging as this condition was, ſince the taſte and judgment of his purchaſer might be influenced by conſiderations that had nothing to do with literary merit, he proceeded as ſteadily as was poſſible, without acceſs to books, or any hope but of obtaining a ſubſiſtence in a priſon!

Althea was his critic and his aſſiſtant; and while ſhe ſat with him thus occupied, he obſerved her former cheerfulneſs ſometimes return; but, whenever the hour came that Mrs. Marchmont

expected

expected her, she seemed distressed: yet, next to being with him, he well knew that nothing gave her so much pleasure as alleviating the sufferings of his mother.

Marchmont one morning conducted Althea to the door, and saw her proceed towards his mother's abode, attended, as usual, by the servant. He then returned to his room, and sat down to his morning's task; in which he was deeply engaged when Bensted came breathless into the room, and said—"Oh, Sir!—there's Chapman has just come in, and says that Mrs. Marchmont has fallen down in a fit under the wall just without—and Fenchurch is like a distracted man, and bid somebody, for God's sake, run to you."

Marchmont totally forgetting that he would not be permitted to go out without some ceremonies that took up time, and not remembering, at that cruel moment, any thing but Althea, he ran

through the area and into the lobby, the door of which was, at that moment, open; and he was proceeding with equal velocity to go out, when he was rudely ſtopped by two of the turnkeys, who cried—"Why ſo faſt, Sir?—Stay a little, if you pleaſe."—Rage and terror now combined to rob Marchmont of all prudence and preſence of mind. He ſtruggled to diſengage himſelf from the graſp of the men who held him, now threatening, now imploring; while they, who thought him ſeized with phrenſy, called other aſſiſtance, and forced him out of the lobby.

It is impoſſible to deſcribe the agony of frantic deſpair he now underwent, or to ſay where it would have ended, if an old man of decent appearance had not come up to him; and, having obtained a hearing with ſome difficulty, ſaid—"Mr. Marchmont, be calm, be pacified. Your wife is recovered—ſhe is well; at leaſt ſhe is ſafe. I have myſelf

ſelf ſeen her conveyed to her mother's; and have, as far I could, chaſtiſed the raſcal who has inſulted her."

This addreſs recalled the ſcattered ſenſes of Marchmont. He ſeized the hand of the perſon who had thus brought him intelligence that ſnatched him from the moſt inſupportable torments, but what he ſaid was wild and incoherent; and he entreated, in the urgent terms of this new-found friend, that he would procure him the means of ſeeing his wife directly, wherever ſhe might be.

This the man, who did not ſeem himſelf to be a priſoner, promiſed to effect, if he would compoſe himſelf; and Marchmont, hardly knowing what he was doing, was led back to his room—where when he arrived he inſiſted that he would not remain, but would go, at whatever hazard, to his wife: and ſuch were the dreadful apprehenſions that now again aſſailed him, that he would have relapſed into the undiſtinguiſhing wildneſs of

furious paſſion, in deſpite of his friendly counſellor, if Fenchurch had not that moment appeared.—Marchmont inarticulately demanded news of his miſtreſs; and the man then, with evident marks of agitation, ſaid—"Thank God, Sir! ſhe is quite ſafe and recovered, and with your mother and the young ladies. They ſent me off to ſay ſo to you, Sir, for I was afraid that I had ſent you a meſſage that would have made you very uneaſy; and indeed, if it had not been for this gentleman, I do not know what I ſhould have done."

Marchmont then renewed his acknowledgments for the kindneſs received, though of what nature it was he knew not; but his impatience to go to Althea returning, he aſked his new acquaintance to accompany him when he went to procure the humiliating permiſſion he was compelled to ſubmit to; and bade Fenchurch, as they went, relate the circumſtances that had ſo alarmed his miſtreſs.

"It

"It was owing, Sir," ſaid he, "to that Mr. Carlingbury; who, for all my lady has kept it to herſelf for fear of ſome quarrel, has behaved extremely impertinent to her very often:—and my lady, ever ſince that day at Mr. Mohun's...."

"At Mr. Mohun's!" exclaimed Marchmont.—"What do you mean?—When has your miſtreſs ſeen Mr. Mohun?"

Fenchurch now appeared extremely confuſed; but his maſter eagerly, and even angrily, repeating his queſtion, he ſaid—"Why, Sir, my lady charged me never to ſpeak of it, becauſe ſhe thought you would be diſpleaſed, ſo ill as he has uſed you, that ſhe went to his houſe."

"To his houſe!—Althea! my wife!—go to Mohun's houſe? Surely the man dreams.—It is impoſſible!—It could never be!"

"I am ſure, Sir, it is true, though," ſaid Fenchurch with great ſimplicity, "but

" but I wiſh I had not mentioned it, for, to be ſure, it had nothing to do with what happened to-day: only I was going to ſay, Sir, that ever ſince that time miſtreſs has been ſo timmerſome, that every thing has frightened her a great deal more than it did before: ſo that juſt now, when that Mr. Carlingbury came up to her (though he did not, that I know of, ſay much more impertinent ſtuff than he uſed to ſay, only he ſeemed, to be ſure, more in liquor), my lady turned ſo pale, that I went forward; and ſhe ſaid, 'Fenchurch, I muſt take your arm—I am afraid I ſhall drop.'—'No, no,' ſaid that rude impudent fellow, puſhing me on one ſide—'I will never ſuffer a ſervant to have that honour while I am here.'—So he puſhed me away, Sir, and I could not bear neither that, nor to ſee my lady ſo frightened—and then I ſeized him by the collar, and he ſtruck me two or three times. My poor lady ſhrieked out, and made back this way;

way; and this gentleman then came up to her, and bid her not be frightened, for he would take care of her.—I gave Mr. Carlingbury, who I am ſure is no gentleman, a good blow or two—and he offered to ſtrip and fight me; for he ſaid he had learned that ſport, and would cure me of being ſaucy to gentlemen as long as I lived. But my buſineſs, I thought, was to take care of my lady, for there was a crowd got about her. So I left him held by ſome of the people that were there, ſwearing he would kill me, I believe—and I preſently found that my lady had fallen down inſenſible, and this gentleman was taking care of her; and then an empty coach, that had juſt put ſomebody down here, paſſing, he and I lifted her into it, and carried her to Mrs. Marchmont's: and preſently he came back to you, and I ſtaid there till Miſs Lucy came out, and ſaid, my lady was come-to, and wanted to ſpeak to me—ſo I went into the room. She

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is quite well again, Sir, I aſſure you; and deſired me to come directly to tell you ſo—and hopes you won't be frightened."

Marchmont, diſtracted by anger at the inſolent conduct of Carlingbury, and by ſurpriſe at what he had heard about Mohun, yielded, however, to the more immediate impreſſion; and was flying to ſeek Carlingbury, whom it was fortunate he did not meet at the moment.—The remonſtrances of his new acquaintance, whoſe name was Deſborough, reſtored him to a better way of thinking.—"Come, come," ſaid the old man with an air as if he had been uſed to be attended to, "let us, my good Sir, have none of theſe raſh doings. Of what *uſe* will it be if you meet this drunken fool, and break his head? I know that he deſerves more than either I or your ſervant have given him, and yet I did my beſt—but I will tell you what *harm* it will do. If any uproar happens between you,

you, you will both be confined; and as he has the moſt intereſt of the two in this place, becauſe, I ſuppoſe, he is the richeſt, you will have the worſt of it. Let the poor wretch alone, for a very contemptible wretch, believe me, he is, and think of your wife; who, I can tell you, deſerves greater ſacrifices than that of your anger againſt ſuch a blockhead as that. Come, I will go with you to ſpeak to the worthy gentleman who is to give you leave out; my credit with him is pretty good, I believe—and perhaps he may truſt you with me without any other attendant."

"I thank you," ſaid Marchmont:—"after all you have done, you have a right to expect I ſhould take your advice. I am rather ſurpriſed, however, as I thought you were yourſelf a priſoner, becauſe I have ſo often ſeen you."

Mr. Deſborough anſwered drily, that he *was* there frequently; and, without any

any farther explanation, proceeded with Marchmont to the officer on whom his going out of the priſon walls depended. This, on Mr. Deſborough ſaying a few words, was granted; and they then went together to Mrs. Marchmont's lodgings.

Arrived at the door, the old man turned to him, and ſaid—"You are in my cuſtody, you know, and ſo you will ſee the reliance I have on your integrity by my leaving you: but the name of Marchmont is no ſtranger to me; and though chivalry exiſts no longer, yet, in a point of real honour, I am ſure I may truſt to the deſcendant of the old cavaliers."—Marchmont looked at him with wonder; his language and his appearance were altogether incongruous.—"Do you know me, Sir?" ſaid he.—"Were you acquainted with my father?"

"Yes," anſwered the ſtranger, "I was once acquainted with your family; and though that has been long over, I

am

am ſorry to ſee *you* in ſuch a place, and ſtill more ſorry to ſee your wife here. Indeed you ſhould never have brought her to a priſon."—"Pray tell me who you are," cried Marchmont eagerly; "you excite even painful curioſity."—"No," replied the ſtranger—"Go and look after that poor terrified young creature, and I will wait for you an hour at a coffee-houſe in the Borough, and then call for you again. The intelligence of who I am, will do as well another time: perhaps I may ſee you again in the evening."

Marchmont was then hurrying to Althea, but Fenchurch overtook him on the ſtairs.—"Pray, dear Sir," ſaid he, "do not mention to my lady what I told you, in my hurry, about Mr. Mohun. I know ſhe is ſo unwilling you ſhould know it, and it would vex her ſo, that I am ſure it would juſt now make her quite ill."—Marchmont, relapſing into his firſt aſtoniſhment, haſtily ſaid—"No, no—

no—I ſhall ſay nothing to diſtreſs her;" and then entered his ſiſter's room, where Althea was yet unable to ſit up.

The ſight of Marchmont, however, ſeemed immediately to revive her; but, before ſhe would relate the cauſe of her terror, ſhe inſiſted on his promiſing not to reſent it. This he evaded doing; yet he appeared ſo much calmer than Althea had expected, that ſhe ventured to relate what indeed ſhe gueſſed he knew already—the frequent impertinence of which Carlingbury had been guilty—" which," ſaid ſhe, " I never mentioned, becauſe I knew it would occaſion a quarrel, and I dread every thing of that ſort."

" And is *that*," ſaid Marchmont, looking at her ſteadily, " the reaſon why you ſhould alſo conceal other alarms that you have had, Althea?"

Althea bluſhed from conſciouſneſs; yet not ſuſpecting that Fenchurch had been ſo unguarded, ſhe only ſaid, " I had

had no other alarms here but from an old gentleman, who appears now to be rather likely to protect than to offend me—for it was he who ſaved me from the inſults of the mob that ſurrounded me, while poor Fenchurch was ſcuffling with that drunken brute."

"And what alarms could he have given you?" enquired Marchmont:—"What did he do?"

"Nothing, perhaps," replied Althea, "that ought to have alarmed me: but whenever I have met him, which has been almoſt every day, he has fixed his eyes on me in ſo ſingular a manner, that I have fancied he knew ſomething of farther miſchief that might be intended us; for methought he had a look of compaſſion—yet it was ſtern—and he ſeemed to long to ſpeak to me, not as that inſolent young man did, but with reproach."

This account increaſed Marchmont's curioſity, but it increaſed alſo his diſ-

quiet

quiet—"Who could this man be? and why did Althea conceal from him her having ſeen Mohun? Why did ſhe ſeek him? How know where he was, and how determine to hold with ſuch a man even momentary converſe?" Such were the enquiries he was ſilently making, when he was informed that two men were ſent by order of the Marſhal to conduct him back. He went down to ſpeak to them, and was told that he muſt immediately go with them; for that a new order was come in reſpect to him, as they believed, or that ſomething or other had happened, that the commander of the fortreſs was extremely angry at finding he had left it.

He was hardly ſuffered to go, in the anguiſh of his heart, and take leave of Althea, as he inſiſted upon her remaining where ſhe was that night, and ſharing Lucy's bed. It was with the utmoſt difficulty ſhe was prevailed upon to conſent to this; but ſhe was ſtill ſo faint

and

and ill, that ſhe was conſcious of her unfitneſs even for ſo ſhort a removal. Marchmont, on her earneſt entreaty, promiſed he would take no notice that day of Carlingbury; and then, in indeſcribable agony, he bade his mother adieu! doubting if he ſhould ever ſee her again, and tore himſelf away.

Many very miſerable hours had in the courſe of his ſhort life been paſſed by Marchmont, but none had ever been ſo overwhelming as the remainder of this day.—Why he was to be more cloſely confined, he could not learn; all he could hear by bribes and enquiries was, that the ſwivel-eyed attorney, as the runners called Vampyre, had been there twice that morning: and Marchmont doubted not but that this additional cruelty was the work of that malignant demon:—and, probably by the order of Mohun, compelled to ſubmit to oppreſſion, which he more than ever deſpaired either of eſcaping from or aveng-

ing,

ing, and diſtracted with a thouſand fears for his mother and his wife, he ſat down alone in his room, and began to conſider what he had of conſolation or ſupport.—Except Althea, whoſe conduct for the firſt time in his life he now thought wrong, there ſeemed no being on earth towards whom he might look for comfort—for of both his friends he was deprived:—at leaſt he began to doubt, whether even the long confirmed friendſhip of Everſley was not worn out by his unceaſing diſtreſſes; for he had twice written to him—time enough had elapſed for repeated anſwers, yet no letter came: and of Forreſter he began to doubt, whether, like many other young men, he did not haſtily form friendſhips, and as haſtily forget them. Even theſe fears, however, were leſs torturing than the rage and indignation he felt in thinking of Mohun, and the reptile he employed. He now indeed gueſſed part of the truth; that Althea (though by what

means

means induced to take ſuch a ſtep he could not imagine) had ſeen Mohun, who having dared to affront her with that libertiniſm to which he was avowedly addicted, he had in the meanneſs of revenge ſent orders for the rules of the priſon to be enforced. When this idea had once taken poſſeſſion of him, it was inſupportable. He walked up and down his narrow room in the moſt cruel perturbation. He curſed his exiſtence; he felt tempted to end it, rather than endure injuries ſo intolerable; and he was yielding to this phrenſy, which in his moments of cooler reflection he was the firſt to condemn, when his laſt-made acquaintance, Mr. Deſborough, entered the room.

His manners were plain, and even blunt, and he ſeemed to aſſume privilege from his age.—"Hey-day," ſaid he, as he entered, and ſaw the diſorder in which Marchmont appeared, "what is all this for? If you deſire me to viſit

you, you muſt not enact Alexander or Oreſtes, or any of your mad heroes.—You don't want ſenſe, I am told, and you don't drink. There are no other excuſes that I know of for a man's behaving like a fool. Sit down quietly, and talk to me—I want to hear why you are in this place—for what ſums—and what you intend to do? Be explicit—I am a plain man, and perhaps you may think not likely to do you any good; but when you have told me all, you ſhall hear what I have to ſay."

Marchmont then related, in as few words as would do it juſtice, the hiſtory of his life previous to the diſtreſsful ſituation in which he was left when his father died—his engagements to the two men who had employed Vampyre againſt him—his acquaintance and marriage with Althea; and concluded with a relation of the conduct of Mohun in the detention of Althea's fortune—and its conſequences, which had placed another barrier

barrier againſt his freedom.—"Yes," ſaid Mr. Deſborough, when he had heard him out, "Mohun is a villain; and as to the monſter he has employed, if ever he ſhould come to the gallows (which, well as he deſerves it, I am afraid he will have cunning enough to avoid), I will venture to aſſert, that a wretch ſo ſtained with crimes never came under the hands of the executioner in this or in any other country. I do not except the Robeſpierres or Dantons of France, who were, I think, though they had by a ſtrange chance the power of doing more extenſive miſchief, leſs ſyſtematical ſcoundrels than either of theſe; but let us talk no more of them, but rather of the means of getting you out of their hands."

Marchmont anſwered in a tone of deep dejection, that of ever eſcaping from them he deſpaired. He then made an ingenuous diſplay of his hopeleſs ſituation. The fortune of Althea, he

ſaid, he held ſacred; nor could he, even if he would, touch it; and the debt conſiderably exceeded it. While he ſpoke of the inviolable regard he ſhould hold it in, his auditor nodded approbation: but, when proceeding to ſtate the chance he thought Althea had, unleſs there were any claimants he was unacquainted with, to ſucceed to a conſiderable property, the old man's eyes brightened with joy—and he eagerly enquired why it was not looked after, and how ſuch a thing came to be neglected. Marchmont related what had been done, which was indeed all the time allowed; but added, that he was much afraid nothing would be effected in ſuch a caſe without a ſuit in Chancery: "and for that you know, Sir," ſaid he, "I have no money."

"I have," ſaid Mr. Deſborough: "I have money enough for ſuch a thing as that, and it ſhall be yours. I had ſome doubts about you, I own; I was afraid you

you had not acted honourably by that charming girl; but I find you are an honeſt fellow, and I will be your friend."

Marchmont, amazed, and hardly knowing how to truſt to profeſſions ſo ſudden and unexpected, thanked him, but it was with heſitation: "I ſee," ſaid Mr. Deſborough, "that you are ſurpriſed at theſe ſort of offers from an acquaintance of a few hours: but I have known more of your family than you are aware of; for, though I am related to you, I queſtion whether you remember having heard my name."

Marchmont again expreſſed his wonder and ſatisfaction: Mr. Deſborough proceeded thus:

"When your grandfather lived in great ſplendour at Eaſtwoodleigh, I was the youngeſt ſon of a clothier in the Weſt—a ſmart fellow for thoſe days: and ſo your aunt thought. I made love to her—there was no Marriage Act then—and ſo we marched off together, and

were married at the next town. But the old gentleman never forgave us; nor did I ever ſee him afterwards. His daughter had five hundred pounds of her own left her by ſome relation, and her father gave her nothing: indeed he had nothing to give—for his ſon, your father, was to have all, that he might keep up the old place. Your father, who was a good-natured man, though he had his foibles, and who is without? came to ſee us once or twice; but we were ſo oppoſite in our notions, that we had no great delight in one another's company. He was what I called a tory, and he called me . . . . not a whig, but a republican. I did not much quarrel with him for ranking me with ſuch names as Sidney and Hampden, but I hated to ſee him, poor man! ruining himſelf for his principles, as he called them, which nobody cared about, or thanked him for. For a great many years we had little or no communication; I loſt my

wife,

wife, who left me no children; and my father having a concern in the Weſt Indies, it fell at his death to me. I was now an unconnected being, neither rich nor poor; and by way of having ſomething to do, I went to look after this property—but I could not endure to be maſter of ſlaves. The whole ſyſtem of a plantation was repugnant to all my feelings, and all my principles. I ſold my cane lands, and the unhappy people who worked them, to whom I would have given their liberty if I had been allowed to do it. It was a bleſſing I could beſtow only on a few. I came home, rich for a man that wanted ſo little; but I was ſoon tired of having nothing to do, and nobody to care for ſo I went for ſome time rambling about the world—not much pleaſed indeed with any thing I ſaw in it. They ſay I'm a miſanthrope. I may be ſo—It is very true that I hate fools, and I am ſure one meets with a vaſt majority of

them; and more, I think, now than when I was a young man. But whether I hate or no the bulk of mankind, I try all I can to do good to individuals; and none move my compaſſion more than poor ſilly fellows, who without any fraud, or any other fault than a little thoughtleſs extravagance, have got cooped up in this or any other ſuch curſed place. I have got two or three of them out lately at little expence; and it was in one of my viſits for that purpoſe that about a fortnight ago I firſt obſerved your wife. I was ſtruck with her youth, beauty, and that air of innocence and intelligence which one ſo ſeldom ſees united. It ſeemed to me very ſtrange and inconſequent that you ſhould bring her here; for I ſoon learned who you was, and I was afraid all was not right. I am now convinced that you deſerve I ſhould have a better opinion of you; and though I hate the nonſenſical cant, that 'all is for the beſt,' and ſuch ſtuff,

when

when one ſees every day that nothing can be much worſe than things in general, yet for once good is come out of evil, perhaps; and I may find a way to get you out of the clutches of theſe harpies. We'll try, however, what is to be done, and ſet about it to-morrow: and now, my dear boy, you ſhall not ſay a word of 'thank you,' and all that. I can ſuppoſe it very well, and have no time to hear it. So God bleſs you! I muſt be gone: but to-morrow at ten o'clock I will be here again; and in the meantime keep yourſelf quiet, and let nothing of all this tranſpire, even to your pretty wife. I have a mind, perhaps, to ſurpriſe her with a preſent—We ſhall ſee." Mr. Deſborough then, without waiting for Marchmont's anſwer, aroſe and diſappeared.

Marchmont in vain attempted to compoſe his ſpirits. All that had paſſed appeared like a dream, from which he feared by inveſtigating it to be awakened. He ſent Fenchurch very early to

enquire after Althea, who wrote to him to ſay ſhe found herſelf quite well, and would be with him at his breakfaſt: but as he dared not reveal the hopes he had that their troubles would be at an end by the interpoſition of this unexpected friend, he wrote again, telling her that he had ſome people to come to him on his affairs, which he had reaſon to hope would turn out ſatisfactory; and therefore begged ſhe would not come before one o'clock, as he thought her being preſent when people ſhe did not know were diſcourſing on buſineſs, would be diſagreeable to her.

The aſſurances this note contained, that the perſons whom Marchmont was to ſee were not unfavourably diſpoſed, were neceſſary to quiet the ſpirits of Althea, who, tormented as ſhe was by the fear of his reſenting the inſulting rudeneſs of Carlingbury, had yet another cauſe of apprehenſion. In the midſt of her terror, when the impertinence

nence of this man had ſo ſhocked and alarmed her, Vampyre, whom ſhe well recollected, had paſſed near her; and could all the ſcourges deprecated in the Litany have appeared perſonified before her, ſhe would have ſuffered leſs than the view of this old hideous monſter inflicted on her. Of his machinations againſt Marchmont, therefore, on whoſe account ſhe ſuppoſed he viſited the priſon, ſhe had the moſt cruel apprehenſions; and the more ſo, as it was too probable the unprincipled Mohun directed this diabolical agent. It was owing to her having ſeen Vampyre at the very moment that Carlingbury ſpoke to her, that Althea had fainted, or very near it; for in general her reſolution and reaſon were ſufficient to ſecure her from ſuch accidents.

But firmly perſuaded that Marchmont would not deceive her, ſhe awaited as calmly as ſhe could the hour at which ſhe was to ſee him.

Marchmont was not ſo tranquil. Till the period when he expected the man to whom he had within a ſhort time been taught to look for his deliverance, he traverſed the area with reſtleſs ſteps.—The hour paſſed, and Mr. Deſborough did not appear. Fears and doubts then aroſe—Perhaps he was of that deſcription of perſons who delight in raiſing expectations only to diſappoint them.—Perhaps he forgot in the morning the benevolent reſolutions of the preceding evening. Yet he did not appear to be ſuch a man, and the account he had given of himſelf was certainly true; for Marchmont now recollected his name, and alliance to his family; though, no intimacy having ever ſubſiſted between the brother and ſiſter, he had never ſeen his aunt, and remembered her only in the catalogue of family pictures that were ſeized and ſold at Eaſtwoodleigh, all of which had been carefully marked with names and dates by his father. Another

other hour paſſed, and ſtill his new-found friend came not. As he walked backwards and forwards he entered into converſation with a clergyman, with whom he had ſometimes talked before. The poor man had been two years a priſoner at the ſuit of a near relation, and ſeemed to have little hope of ever being releaſed, though his original debt was but a hundred pounds. Marchmont having ſeen him once or twice ſpeaking to Mr. Deſborough, now enquired what he knew of him.

"He is what is called a character," replied his companion: "but to be ſure he is humane; for he has releaſed three perſons who have been confined here for debts, one of them not very ſmall, and has compounded with the creditors of two others, and liberated four or five who lingered here merely becauſe they were unable to pay the expences of their releaſe. However, he is accounted a very odd eccentric character."

"And

"And not without reaſon," ſaid Marchmont; "for, unhappily, ſuch actions are very uncommon."

"He is ſaid alſo," continued the other, "to be of doubtful principles."

"Principles!" repeated Marchmont: "Of what ſort?"

"Both religious and political," replied Mr. Wingrove; "and indeed I am ſorry to ſay that he has on both ſubjects very heterodox notions. I have taken ſome pains to combat his unhappy prepoſſeſſions when we have talked together, but I grieve to think that he is moſt obſtinately bigoted to a ſet of notions . . ."

"Which cannot, however, be very prejudicial to ſociety," interrupted Marchmont, "ſince it appears that his life is paſſed, and his fortune expended, in doing good."

Mr. Wingrove, who had been educated in the ſtricteſt of what uſed to be called High-church principles (in the reign of Queen Anne), and had never ventured

ventured to entertain or liſten to an idea that ſavoured of ſchiſm, either in church or ſtate, would now have entered into a long diſcourſe, to prove that it was impoſſible any body could have common ſenſe who did; but in the midſt of the firſt *head* of his argument, which he divided ſermon-wiſe, Marchmont felt ſomebody touch him gently on the ſhoulder. He turned, and beheld in deep mourning his friend Everſley.

The pleaſure which the ſight of this eſtimable man gave him was not abated by the dreſs in which he ſaw him; ſince it afforded reaſon to hope, what he found to be true, that Everſley was delivered for ever from the wretched woman who had occaſioned all the unhappineſs of his life. They retired immediately to Marchmont's room; where, as ſoon as they were able tranquilly to diſcourſe, Everſley related, that the miſerable ſtate (which might well be called a degree of phrenſy) in which the laſt month of his wife's

wife's ſad exiſtence had paſſed, had prevented his being able to act in regard to Marchmont's affairs as he would otherwiſe have done. "But I believed," ſaid he, "that it was drawing to a criſis, and thought I ſhould ſoon be in a ſituation effectually to aſſiſt you. Much as I had cauſe on every account to deſire that Heaven would reſcue me from ſuch an intolerable burden as I had long ſuſtained, while to herſelf the poor woman's exiſtence was as little deſirable (for ſhe was the martyr of intemperance and her own conſtitutional failings); yet I could not help being affected, when the moment came, with ſenſations of mingled pity and horror. A very little reflection, however, reſtored me to a ſenſe of my releaſe, and to the power of engaging in the duties that I ſtill had to execute. I attended the remains of Mrs. Everſley to the place where her parents were buried; and I afterwards went with my two daughters to her aunt,

with

with whom ſhe made me promiſe that I ſhould place them. Having ſettled all that related to them, till I can ſee farther what will be moſt likely to counteract the unhappy education they have hitherto received, I haſtened, my dear friend, to you — happy if I can now, however late, give you proofs of the intereſt I feel in all that relates to you."

Marchmont now gave Everſley an account of all that had lately happened, and ended with the odd circumſtance which had occurred the preceding day. He heard with great ſatisfaction that another friend was likely to aſſiſt him in the releaſe of Marchmont, which he meant at all events to effect.—"Nor," ſaid he, "in undertaking this alone, my friend, ſhall I incur a greater riſk than I can very ſafely afford, for I ſuppoſe you cannot doubt your wife's ſucceſſion to half her couſin's eſtate?"

Marchmont eagerly enquired what intelligence he had gained on that ſubject,

and

and Everſley took from his pocket a letter from Mr. Thoreſby, written in the true ſpirit of a lawyer; for, with a great many ſentences that ſounded very fairly, it really meant nothing more than that if Mrs. Armyn Marchmont could make out her claim, of which he knew nothing, it muſt be referred to the proper place, there being doubts as to the entail and other circumſtances. This proper place was undoubtedly Chancery. But Everſley re-aſſured his friend by ſaying, "All this is mere equivocation, to elude for the preſent any enquiry. He thinks that it is no buſineſs of mine; that people are ſeldom very ſtrenuous for others; and that, till a perſon more immediately concerned appears, he can baffle enquiry. He has been told, and from Lady Dacres, that your wife is abroad, and heartily hopes chance may ſo far befriend him, that he may keep poſſeſſion of the whole eſtate. However, I think he will hardly

do

do that: for Mrs. Thoreſby is the daughter of one, and your wife of another ſiſter of the late Mr. Trevyllian's father; and of their having exactly the ſame claim there cannot be the ſhadow of doubt. I have conſulted upon it an old lawyer, who knows all the circumſtances of the eſtate of Trevyllian the grandfather perfectly: and he aſſures me, that there is not a queſtion as to your wife's right; and that, if Mr. Thoreſby means any thing but merely to equivocate from habit, he waits only in the hope that ſome advantage may be maintained againſt people who were evidently in no condition to undertake a Chancery ſuit. When he finds that only expence and diſgrace follow his reſiſtance, I am convinced you will have no farther trouble."

Benſted now entered, to inform Marchmont a gentleman enquired for him. He of courſe expected to ſee Mr. Deſborough—inſtead of whom Captain Forreſter,

Forreſter, ſupported by his ſervant, appeared.

Marchmont, though ſhocked to ſee how ill he looked, expreſſed his pleaſure at their meeting. "And I, my dear Marchmont," ſaid he, "rejoice to ſee you, though indeed I had rather have ſeen you any where elſe. Don't fancy however, that I ſhould not have found you out in *any* place, the very moment after I could diſengage myſelf from my own family. But this wound of mine broke out again, and confined me to my bed for above a month. They carried me to Bath, and I have but juſt contrived to crawl about again. I came to Town yeſterday; and to-day I determined to ſee you, and to know what can be done to ſet you at liberty. I think I need not ſay, that all I can do you may command; and if that is not enough to be effectually uſeful to you, my family will come forward to oblige me in the only favour I am likely to aſk

of

of them." Marchmont warmly expreſſed his acknowledgements, till Everſley, eagerly interrupting him, cried —— "What then, as Captain Forreſter is ſo kindly diſpoſed, what hinders us from going immediately together to give bail, ſince two will be required? And why ſhould you ſtay another hour in this place?" Forreſter earneſtly entreated that not a moment might be loſt; while Marchmont, who thought ſecurity for ſo large a ſum, more than either he or Everſley ought to undertake, felt himſelf at once happy in having two ſuch friends, and yet recoiling from obligations which it might never be in his power to diſcharge. Their debate was ſuſpended, and indeed concluded, by the entrance of Mr. Deſborough.

He ſat down with the air of a man vexed and fatigued. "Well," cried he, "I ſuppoſe you had given me up? And I began to think I ſhould not get to you to-day. I have never undertaken ſuch

ſuch a knot of ſcoundrels — they have given me a good breathing—but courage, my dear boy! you are out of their hands." He then told Marchmont he was at liberty, adding, "But you muſt come down to the Marſhal-room. You know, or I ſuppoſe don't know, that there are perſonal ceremonies to go through. If you make haſte, you may chance ſtill to find honeſt Mr. Vampyre there, who took the trouble to come himſelf to object to my bail, and for other ſpecial purpoſes—among which, was to lodge two detainers againſt you; one, I think, from Lady Dacres, for your wife's board for ſome months, and money which it ſeems that worthy dame paid for her." Marchmont looked amazed. "Nay, my good friend," ſaid Mr. Deſborough, "you and theſe two gentlemen look as much aſtoniſhed as if you had never before heard of or experienced the villany of mankind." "I hope, my dear Sir," ſaid Marchmont,

mont, "you have not paid theſe ſums?" "I have paid none of them," replied Deſborough; "but I have given bail for them all with the aſſiſtance of a friend I brought with me. The iniquity I have diſcovered even in ſo ſhort a time as I have employed in it this morning is really beyond the calculation that, miſanthrope as they ſay I am, I could have made of the depravity of Vampyre himſelf. But come, Marchmont, I am impatient to ſee you at liberty, and to offer to my fair friend a preſent that I know ſhe will thank me for. There is yet more to be done than will take us up an hour, before I can have that pleaſure."

Everſley now offered to aſſiſt this worthy and friendly man in his benevolent work; and Forreſter, overjoyed at ſo unexpected a change in his friend's affairs, retired — ſince he was not wanted — having firſt deſired Marchmont to let him know where he could ſee him the

next

next day; which he promiſed as ſoon as he knew himſelf. It was every way improper to ſuffer any ſudden news even of this joyful tendency to be carried to Mrs. Marchmont and Althea. Forreſter would have undertaken any commiſſion to them, but he was quite a ſtranger. Fenchurch, however, reminding his maſter that his lady was to come at one o'clock, was diſpatched with a meſſage, which he promiſed to deliver with great caution, importing that Mr. Everſley was come, and with his maſter would be with the ladies in an hour; but he was not to reveal abruptly that the impriſonment of the latter was at an end. The poor fellow ran away giddy with tranſport to execute this order, and Marchmont and his two friends repaired to the Marſhal-room, where the attorney employed by Mr. Deſborough waited, and where Vampyre had left his clerk. Every pretence by which he had attempted to

detain

detain Marchmont being overuled, the fiend, diſappointed in his infernal malice, had fled: and it was fortunate he had, as Marchmont might have been unable to check his indignation at the ſight of him.

Every form being gone through, and every fee, which the ſub-executors of our mild and equitable laws are ſuffered to extort from the unfortunate debtor, being paid, Deſborough, whom Marchmont was utterly unable to thank, took his leave, appointing a place of meeting in the evening, where he ſaid he had ſomething to propoſe to Marchmont, and deſired to ſee Mr. Everſley with him.—"Since it will not be quite wiſe, I believe, to execute my plan of ſurpriſing Mrs. Armyn Marchmont, you ſhall only carry her my love, and tell her I ſhall have a great deal to ſay to her when we meet."

It would be difficult to deſcribe the change from extreme deſpondence, to

hope and joy, that was diffuſed through Marchmont's family, when his liberation was, with precautions, made known to them.—Althea was unable to remain in the room—but retired to give courſe to her tears; while Marchmont went from her to his mother, ſoothing them alternately, and alternately embracing his three ſiſters.

Everſley, as ſoon as Mrs. Marchmont ſeemed compoſed enough to bear it, related to her what had happened to himſelf; and he informed her then of the probability there was of her ſon's immediately ſucceeding, in right of his wife, to ſo conſiderable a property. The half-extinguiſhed lamp of life ſeemed to be renewed; but faint, and almoſt ready to doubt whether after ſo much miſery a ray of ſun-ſhine might gleam on her declining days, ſhe could not long ſupport the converſation. The two friends, at the hour appointed, met Mr. Deſborough; who, when Marchmont would have

have acknowledged as warmly as it deſerved his unexampled kindneſs and friendſhip, ſpoke thus:

"You are not at all obliged to me, for what I have done was to pleaſe myſelf: not exactly becauſe you were a relation of my wife's, for that would have been no recommendation if I had found you an idle, good-for-nothing young fellow—ſuch, for example, as that Carlingbury. They ſay I am a reformer. They ſay wrong: for I have long ſince given up any ſuch chimerical idea, as that of being able to make men happier who are wicked and miſerable by preſcription. Withdrawing, therefore, from any ſuch Utopian and hopeleſs attempt, I believed the beſt thing I could do was, to relieve, where I could, individual diſtreſs, and to lighten the chains that villany often impoſes on ſimplicity under the name of law. In this I have done ſome good, and what elſe ought a man to do on this earth? It is *my re-*

ligion to believe, that I ſerve God beſt in contributing to the happineſs, or rather in relieving the miſery, of his creatures. In this my form of worſhip I have ſometimes been ſubject to impoſition; I have often been laughed at; oftener reviled—and ſometimes I have met with ingratitude: but I perſiſt, becauſe I expected no other pleaſure than that I have found; and it is not in ſuch places that, if I any where ſought gratitude, I ſhould hope to ſucceed. Now then let us talk of all this no more. Let us conſider how we can the ſooneſt remove your mother, wife, and ſiſters, from the bad air of this Borough; and then we will beſtir ourſelves to find you a houſe of your own to put them in. I ſuppoſe you have yet fixed on no plan?"

Marchmont anſwered—"No."—Mr. Deſborough then ſaid—"I have a houſe on Clapham Common, which I call my home, though I ſometimes am abſent from it for three or four months at a time.

time. I have a careful old woman there as a houſekeeper, with a cook and a houſemaid; there is room enough for you all: the diſtance is eaſy, and I can order the houſe to be ready to-morrow. What do you think of becoming viſitors to me for two or three months? There is nothing that will oblige me ſo much."

Marchmont, forbidden to expreſs, could only look his gratitude. This plan, with the perfect coincidence of Mrs. Marchmont, was the next day put in execution. Marchmont did not, however, take final leave of the priſon, without undertaking the relief of his unfortunate neighbour, Benſted. Mr. Deſborough compounded his debt—releaſed, and ſent him happy to his own country.

Althea and Marchmont now looked forward only to happineſs, and ſaw that it was not yet too late to hope that the mother they ſo fondly loved would be

ſpared to their prayers; while new proſpects of additional ſatisfaction opened to her. Mr. Everſley, who was almoſt every day their viſitor, was impreſſed by the mild merit of Amelia: to *his* merit ſhe could not be inſenſible; and it was ſettled that, as ſoon as the uſual forms admitted, the marriage ſhould take place, by which Everſley hoped to forget the miſeries of his firſt union.

Captain Forreſter, whoſe affection for Marchmont induced him to look with partiality on all his family, needed not this bias to attach him to Lucy. Her beauty, her vivacity, and ſweetneſs of temper, ſoon taught him to overlook her want of fortune; and to her family Lord Stanwarden himſelf could not object. Such had been the fears of his family for the life of Forreſter, that they now dreamed not of oppoſing his inclinations. Lord Stanwarden therefore conſented to this marriage, and agreed to make ſuch a ſettlement on his ſon, as,

with

with what his female relation engaged to do for him, would enable the young people to live in affluence.

Whatever oppoſition had been meditated by Mr. Thoreſby to Marchmont's claim in right of Althea, he ſoon gave it up when he found that Mr. Deſborough ſupported thoſe claims. In about four months, therefore, the moiety of Mr. Trevyllian's eſtate was, as ſettled by arbitrators, relinquiſhed to Althea. The income of it was ſeven-and-twenty hundred a year; and a part of it compriſed the houſe formerly inhabited by Mrs. Trevyllian, where the happieſt days of Althea's life had paſſed, and where ſhe now propoſed, and Marchmont readily conſented, to take up their future reſidence.

Mr. Deſborough had no ſooner got that important point adjuſted for them, than he began to enquire into the former circumſtances of thoſe embarraſſments that had haſtened the death of the elder Marchmont,

Marchmont, and overclouded, for ſo many years, the life of his ſon. Indefatigable in his enquiries, and with money to ſecond them, he ſoon traced the ſcheme of iniquity in which Vampyre had ſo deeply been engaged; and a great part of the eſtate, including the houſe at Eaſtwoodleigh, was recovered. Marchmont, without any deſign of living there, or yielding to the fatal pride that had ruined his father, viſited the place as ſoon as it became his. Mr. and Mrs. Wansford had long ſince been diſmiſſed by Lady Dacres, and lived in great poverty in a neighbouring village. Marchmont removed them to a farm near his intended reſidence, and placed with them the old faithful Mrs. Moſeley, to end her days in comfort and repoſe. Phœbe Prior, to whom, as well as to Mrs. Moſeley, Althea had frequently ſent aſſiſtance, had been dead for ſome time.

Mohun, after an ineffectual ſtruggle, by which he only ſhewed the daring in-

juſtice

juſtice he thought himſelf capable of maintaining, was compelled to pay Althea's fortune: but he was too high in his profeſſion to care what was ſaid of him; and Marchmont, at Althea's earneſt prayer, as well as in conſequence of Mr. Deſborough's remonſtrance, forbore to ſeek him.—Lady Dacres, the moſt unhappy of mothers, learned to wiſh, in the bitterneſs of her heart, that ſhe had never had a ſon.

Mr. Deſborough, who became hourly more fond of Althea, lived very much with them. He ſtill continued to expend a great part of his yearly income in charity: the whole of his fortune, after his death, he has given to Marchmont and his poſterity.

The virtues that Althea ſo early poſſeſſed, and which adverſity had ſerved to improve and ſtrengthen, were far from failing under the influence of proſperity; and the happineſs of her huſband, and of his family, which was her work,

work (for without her they muſt have been loſt); the bleſſings ſhe diffuſed around her, as well by her example to the rich, as by her benevolence to the poor, were her earthly reward.—Marchmont indeed ſometimes trembled as he conſidered his felicity; and, believing it too great to fall to the ſhare of any human being, he, with awe and gratitude, endeavoured to deſerve its continuance.

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